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JC644 U.S. PTO

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL
(Large Entity)*(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))*Docket No.
NAK1-BN18

Total Pages in this Submission

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TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTSBox Patent Application
Washington, D.C. 20231

Transmitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) and 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b) is a new utility patent application for an invention entitled:

FINAL MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHOD

and invented by:

Tomoko Yamaguchi et al.If a **CONTINUATION APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.: _____

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Enclosed are:

Application Elements

1. ☒ Filing fee as calculated and transmitted as described below
2. ☒ Specification having One Hundred Nine (109) pages and including the following:
 - a. ☒ Descriptive Title of the Invention
 - b. ☐ Cross References to Related Applications *(if applicable)*
 - c. ☐ Statement Regarding Federally-sponsored Research/Development *(if applicable)*
 - d. ☐ Reference to Microfiche Appendix *(if applicable)*
 - e. ☒ Background of the Invention
 - f. ☒ Brief Summary of the Invention
 - g. ☒ Brief Description of the Drawings *(if drawings filed)*
 - h. ☒ Detailed Description
 - i. ☒ Claim(s) as Classified Below
 - j. ☒ Abstract of the Disclosure

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL (Large Entity)

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Application Elements (Continued)

3. ☒ Drawing(s) (when necessary as prescribed by 35 USC 113)
- a. ☒ Formal Number of Sheets Thirty-Five (35)
- b. ☐ Informal Number of Sheets _____
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration
- a. ☒ Newly executed (original or copy) ☐ Unexecuted
- b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d)) (for continuation/divisional application only)
- c. ☐ With Power of Attorney ☐ Without Power of Attorney
- d. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application,
see 37 C.F.R. 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. ☐ Incorporation By Reference (usable if Box 4b is checked)
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.
6. ☐ Computer Program in Microfiche (Appendix)
7. ☐ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all must be included)
- a. ☐ Paper Copy
- b. ☐ Computer Readable Copy (identical to computer copy)
- c. ☐ Statement Verifying Identical Paper and Computer Readable Copy

Accompanying Application Parts

8. ☒ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(B) Statement (when there is an assignee)
10. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
11. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Acknowledgment postcard
14. ☒ Certificate of Mailing
- ☐ First Class ☒ Express Mail (Specify Label No.): EM074234802US

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Accompanying Application Parts (Continued)

15. ☒ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) *(if foreign priority is claimed)*
16. ☐ Additional Enclosures *(please identify below):*

Request That Application Not Be Published Pursuant To 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)

17. ☐ Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2), Applicant hereby requests that this patent application not be published pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(1). Applicant hereby certifies that the invention disclosed in this application has not and will not be the subject of an application filed in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication of applications 18 months after filing of the application.

Warning

An applicant who makes a request not to publish, but who subsequently files in a foreign country or under a multilateral international agreement specified in 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)(B)(i), must notify the Director of such filing not later than 45 days after the date of the filing of such foreign or international application. A failure of the applicant to provide such notice within the prescribed period shall result in the application being regarded as abandoned, unless it is shown to the satisfaction of the Director that the delay in submitting the notice was unintentional.

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Fee Calculation and Transmittal

CLAIMS AS FILED

For	#Filed	#Allowed	#Extra	Rate	Fee
Total Claims	30	- 20 =	10	x \$18.00	\$180.00
Indep. Claims	21	- 3 =	18	x \$80.00	\$1,440.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/>					\$0.00
BASIC FEE					\$710.00
OTHER FEE (specify purpose) Assignment Recordation					\$40.00
TOTAL FILING FEE					\$2,370.00

- ☒ A check in the amount of **\$2,370.00** to cover the filing fee is enclosed.
- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge and credit Deposit Account No. **16-2462** as described below. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- ☐ Charge the amount of _____ as filing fee.
- ☒ Credit any overpayment.
- ☒ Charge any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17.
- ☐ Charge the issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.311(b).

Signature

Joseph W. Price, Reg. No. 25,124
PRICE AND GESS
2100 S.E. Main St., Ste. 250
Irvine, CA 92614
Tel: 949/261-8433
Fax: 949/261-9072

Dated: November 28, 2000

CC:

PRICE AND GESS

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

JOSEPH W. PRICE
ALBIN H. GESS
MICHAEL J. MOFFATT
GORDON E. GRAY III
BRADLEY D. BLANCHE

2100 S.E. MAIN STREET, SUITE 250
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA 92614-6238

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
TELEPHONE: (949) 261-8433
FACSIMILE: (949) 261-9072
FACSIMILE: (949) 261-1726

OF COUNSEL
JAMES F. KIRK

e-mail: pgu@pgulaw.com

SPECIFICATION, CLAIMS, AND ABSTRACT **ONE HUNDRED NINE (109) PAGES**

Applicant(s): Tomoko Yamaguchi et al. et al.
Title: FINAL MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHOD
Attorney's
Docket No.: NAK1-BN18

"EXPRESS MAIL" MAILING
LABEL NO. EM074234802US

DATE OF DEPOSIT: November 28, 2000

FILE MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

(1) Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a file management apparatus. More particularly, the present invention relates to a file management apparatus and a file management method which are suitable for the case where each file is composed of logical units (segments).

(2) Description of Related Art

General-purpose operating systems have a file system (file management apparatus) for managing files, as one of the functions thereof. The file management apparatus uses names of files (file names) stored in a storage apparatus. The file names and storage positions of files are registered with a directory (catalog). When a user requests to read or write data from/into a file specifying a file name, the file management apparatus refers to the directory to detect a storage position of a file having the file name, and reads or writes the file from/into the storage apparatus. Suppose, for example, a user in an FTP system composed of FTP clients and an FTP server sends a request specifying a file name from an FTP client, then the FTP client sends a request command including the file name to the FTP server. The file management apparatus in the FTP server refers to the directory to detect a storage position of a file having the file

name, reads the file from the storage apparatus, and sends the read_file to the FTP client.

In the above-described system, the user need not be conscious of the storage position of the file, but just specify the file name to access the file.

Meanwhile, some files include logical units (segments). For example, a file may include different pieces of video data which are recorded at different times. In this case, some portions in the file are consecutive in the time domain and other portions are not. That is to say, a logical unit is formed based on the time-domain continuity of the portions in a file. More specifically, a sequence of portions that are consecutive in the time domain form a segment, and a gap between non-consecutive portions is regarded as a gap between segments.

A user may want to transfer or reproduce one specific segment among a plurality of segments contained in a file, as well as the whole file. To achieve this, the user has to find gaps between segments one by one as he/she produces the file after reading it from a storage apparatus, write down the addresses of the gaps, and input a written-down address to the file management apparatus to access a desired segment. The file management apparatus accesses the segment using the address input from the user. However, this operation is very complicated and it becomes a heavy burden to the user.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a file management apparatus and a file management method which can access data in units of segments constituting files, as well as in units of files, and allow users to easily specify desired segments.

The above object is fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each include a plurality of numbered pieces of data; a position information storage unit operable to store pieces of position information that indicate segment storage positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position information being in a one-to-one correspondence with segment names, and each segment being a set of pieces of data having consecutive numbers; an access request receiving unit operable to receive a segment access request specifying a segment name; a position information read unit operable to read, from the position information storage unit, a piece of position information corresponding to the segment name specified in the segment access request; and a segment access unit operable to access a segment in the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position information.

With the above construction, when a file includes one

or more segments which are sets of pieces of data having consecutive numbers, not only the whole file but the segments can be accessed. That is, data in files can be accessed in units of segments, and the segments can be accessed by a simple method of specifying the segment names in much the same way as a conventional method of accessing files by specifying file names.

The above object is fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned a timecode; a position information storage unit operable to store pieces of position information that indicate segment storage positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position information being in a one-to-one correspondence with segment names, each segment being a set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes; an access request receiving unit operable to receive a segment access request specifying a segment name; a position information read unit operable to read, from the position information storage unit, a piece of position information corresponding to the segment name specified in the segment access request; and a segment access unit operable to access a segment in the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position information.

With the above construction, when a file includes one or more segments which are sets of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes, not only the whole file but the segments can be accessed. That is, data in files can be accessed in units
5 of segments, and the segments can be accessed by a simple method of specifying the segment names in much the same way as a conventional method of accessing files by specifying file names.

In the above file management apparatus, each piece of segment position information may include (1) an address indicating
10 a file start storage position of a file to which the segment belongs, and either (2-1) (a) an address offset indicating a size of a portion between the file start and a start of the segment and (b) an address offset indicating a size of a portion between the file start and an end of the segment, or (2-2) (a) an address
15 offset indicating a size of a portion between the file start and a start of the segment and (c) a size of the segment.

With the above construction, each piece of segment position information stored in the segment information storage unit is represented by (1) the start address of the file to which
20 the segment belongs and (2) an address offset (relative address) of the segment. Accordingly, the segment positions can be indicated by recording address offsets in addition to the file start address which is held also by conventional file management apparatuses. With this method, only the file start is represented
25 by an absolute address with a lot of bits, and segment positions

are represented by relative addresses with a small number of bits, resulting in use of less number of bits than the case of representing the segment positions by absolute addresses.

In the above file management apparatus, the position
5 information storage unit may store the pieces of position
information in the same order as the segments for each file, and
the file management apparatus further comprising: a receiving unit
operable to receive a segment name obtainment request; and a
segment name output unit operable to, after the receiving unit
10 receives the segment name obtainment request, refer to the
position information storage unit and output to outside the file
management apparatus a list of segment names which each include at
least (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs and
(2) a character sequence which indicates a position of the segment
15 in one or more segments belonging to the file.

With the above construction, each segment name includes
(1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs and (2) a
character sequence which indicates a position of the segment in
one or more segments belonging to the file. This provides users
20 with segment names which are unique and easy to recognize.

In the above file management apparatus, the position
information storage unit may store a table showing relationships
between (1) file names of files to which the segments belong, (2)
serial numbers of the segments in the files which are assigned in
25 order of storage in the files, and (3) pieces of position

information, and the position information read unit, after receiving a segment name, refers to the table to detect a piece of position information that corresponds to a file name and a serial number of the segment which are included in the segment name, and
5 reads the detected piece of position information from the table.

With the above construction, the position information read unit can detect, by referring to a segment name, (1) the unique file to which the access target segment belongs and (2) the unique position of the access target segment among the segments in
10 the file.

The above object is also fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus
15 comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned a timecode; a first position information storage unit operable to store pieces of position information that indicate file storage positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position
20 information being in a one-to-one correspondence with file names; a second position information storage unit operable to store pieces of position information that indicate segment storage positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position information being in a one-to-one correspondence with segment
25 names, and each segment being a set of pieces of data having

consecutive timecodes; an access request receiving unit operable
to receive an access request specifying an access target name
which is either a segment name or a file name; a judgement unit
operable to judge whether the access target name is a segment name
5 or a file name; a position information read unit operable to read,
from either the first position information storage unit or the
second position information storage unit, a piece of position
information corresponding to the access target name judged by the
judgement unit; and an access unit operable to access either a
10 segment or a file stored in the file storage unit by referring to
the read piece of position information.

With the above construction, the judgement unit judges
whether the access target name is a segment name or a file name,
and based on this judgement, the position information read unit
15 reads a piece of file position information or a piece of segment
position information. Accordingly, when a file includes one or
more segments, both the file and the segments can be accessed with
the same method. This reduces the load on the user.

In the above file management apparatus, the judgement
20 unit may judge that the access target name is a segment name when
the access target name includes a name of a file stored in the
file storage unit and a character sequence indicating a serial
number of a segment in the file.

With the above construction, the judgement unit judges
25 that the access target name is a segment name when the access

target name includes a name of a file stored in the file storage unit and a character sequence indicating a serial number of a segment in the file, such as a number (1, 2,...) or a capital letter (A, B, ...). It is therefore possible to judge immediately from the access target name whether the request is a segment access request or a file access request, without referring to file names stored in the file information storage unit, for example.

The above object is also fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus comprising: a file obtaining unit operable to obtain files which each include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each been assigned a timecode, and store the obtained files in a file storage unit; the file storage unit operable to store the obtained files; a position information obtaining unit operable to recognize each set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes as a segment, obtain pieces of position information that indicate segment storage positions in the file storage unit, and store the obtained pieces of position information in a position information storage unit; the position information storage unit operable to store the obtained pieces of position information; a segment access request receiving unit operable to receive a segment access request specifying a segment; a position information read unit operable to read, from the position information storage unit, a

piece of position information corresponding to the segment specified in the segment access request; and a segment access unit operable to access the segment in the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position information.

5 With the above construction, when a file includes different pieces of video data recorded at different times, the video data can be accessed in units of segments which are each composed of video data having consecutive timecodes. It is therefore possible, for example, to play a piece of video data
10 recorded at a specific time, among the segments in the file.

 The above object is also fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus
15 comprising: a file obtaining unit operable to obtain files which each include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each been assigned a timecode, and store the obtained files in a file storage unit; the file storage unit operable to store the obtained files; a segment identifying unit operable to recognize each set
20 of pieces of video data having consecutive timecodes as a segment; a position information creating unit operable to create pieces of position information that indicate storage positions of the identified segments in the file storage unit, and store the created pieces of position information in a position information
25 storage unit; the position information storage unit operable to

store the created pieces of position information; a segment access request receiving unit operable to receive a segment access request specifying a segment; a position information read unit operable to read, from the position information storage unit, a
5 piece of position information corresponding to the segment specified in the segment access request; and a segment access unit operable to access the segment in the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position information.

With the above construction, it is possible for the
10 apparatus to identify each segment in a file by referring to the timecode assigned to the video data. With this arrangement, the user need not specify a desired segment in the file.

The above object is also fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a
15 one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each include one or more segments that are each a logical unit; a position information storage unit operable to store pieces of
20 position information that indicate segment storage positions in the file storage unit; an access request receiving unit operable to receive a segment set access request specifying a segment set name, each segment set being composed of all segments in a file, and each segment set name including a name of the file and a
25 character sequence unique to segment set names; a position

information read unit operable to identify a file to which a segment set corresponding to the specified segment set name belongs, and read, from the position information storage unit, pieces of position information corresponding to all segments
5 belonging to the identified file, recognizing the read pieces of position information as a piece of position information of the segment set; and a segment set access unit operable to access the segment set in the file storage unit by referring to the piece of position information of the segment set.

10 With the above construction, when a file includes one or more segments which are logical units, not only the whole file but the segments can be accessed. That is, data in files can be accessed in units of segments, and the segments can be accessed by a simple method of specifying the segment names in much the same
15 way as a conventional method of accessing files by specifying file names. This has an effect especially in the case where the file includes a free space in which no segment is stored. That is, in conventional file access methods, it is impossible to access only segments excluding the other portions in a file. In contrast, in
20 the present method of accessing segment sets, it is possible to extract and access only the segment portion in the file.

In the above file management apparatus, each piece of segment position information includes (1) an address indicating a file start storage position of a file to which the segment
25 belongs, and either (2-1) (a) an address offset indicating a size

of a portion between the file start and a start of the segment and
(b) an address offset indicating a size of a portion between the
file start and an end of the segment, or (2-2) (a) an address
offset indicating a size of a portion between the file start and
5 a start of the segment and (c) a size of the segment.

With the above construction, each piece of segment
position information stored in the segment information storage
unit is represented by (1) the start address of the file to which
the segment belongs and (2) an address offset (relative address)
10 of the segment. Accordingly, the segment positions can be
indicated by recording address offsets in addition to the file
start address which is held also by conventional file management
apparatuses. With this method, only the file start is represented
by an absolute address with a lot of bits, and segment positions
15 are represented by relative addresses with a small number of bits,
resulting in use of less number of bits than the case of
representing the segment positions by absolute addresses.

The above file management apparatus may further
comprise: a receiving unit operable to receive a segment set name
20 obtainment request; and a segment set name output unit operable
to, after the receiving unit receives the segment set name
obtainment request, refer to the position information storage unit
and output to outside the file management apparatus a list of
segment set names which each include (1) a file name of a file to
25 which the segment set belongs and (2) a character sequence unique

to segment set names.

With the above construction, each segment name includes (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs and (2) a character sequence which is unique to segment set names. This provides users with segment set names which are unique and easy to recognize.

In the above file management apparatus, each file may include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each been assigned a timecode, and the file management apparatus further comprises: a segment identifying unit operable to recognize each set of pieces of video data having consecutive timecodes as a segment; and a position information creating unit operable to create pieces of position information that indicate storage positions of the identified segments in the file storage unit, and store the created pieces of position information in the position information storage unit.

With the above construction, when a file includes different pieces of video data recorded at different times, and the user wants to play only a piece of video data recorded at a specific time, the specific piece of video data can be identified by referring to its timecode. With this arrangement, the user need not specify a desired piece of video data in the file.

The above object is also fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that

correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each include one or more segments that are each a logical unit; a first position information storage unit operable to store pieces of position information that indicate file storage positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position information being in a one-to-one correspondence with file names; a second position information storage unit operable to store pieces of position information that indicate segment storage positions in the file storage unit; an access request receiving unit operable to receive an access request specifying an access target name; a judgement unit operable to judge whether the access target name is a segment set name or a file name, each segment set being a set of all segments included in one file; a position information read unit operable to read, from either the first position information storage unit or the second position information storage unit, a piece of position information corresponding to the access target name judged by the judgement unit; and an access unit operable to access either a segment set or a file stored in the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position information.

With the above construction, the judgement unit judges whether the access target name is a segment set name or a file name, and based on this judgement, the position information read unit reads a piece of file position information or a piece of segment set position information. Accordingly, when a file

includes one or more segments, both the file and the segment sets can be accessed with the same method of specifying an access target name. This reduces the load on the user.

In the above file management apparatus, the judgement
5 unit may judge that the access target name is a segment set name when the access target name includes a name of a file stored in the file storage unit and a character sequence unique to segment set names.

With the above construction, the judgement unit judges
10 that the access target name is a segment set name when the access target name includes a name of a file stored in the file storage unit and a character sequence unique to segment set names. It is therefore possible to judge immediately from the access target name whether the request is a segment set access request or a file
15 access request, without referring to file names stored in the file information storage unit, for example.

The above object is also fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that
20 correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned a timecode; a position information storage unit operable to store pieces of position information that indicate positions of free
25 spaces in the files, each free space not storing a segment, and

each segment being a set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes; an add request receiving unit operable to receive a segment add request which requests to add a new segment to a file; a segment obtaining unit operable to obtain a new segment; a position information read unit operable to read, from the position information storage unit, a piece of free space position information; and a segment add unit operable to add the new segment to the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of free space position information.

10 With the above construction, a new segment is written onto a portion (free space) excluding segments in a file when the new segment is added to the file. Accordingly, a new segment can be added to a file maintaining existent segments in the file.

The above object is also fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned a timecode; a position information storage unit operable to store pieces of free space position information that indicate positions of free spaces in the files, each free space not storing a segment, and also store pieces of segment position information that indicate positions of segments in the files, each segment
25 being a set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes; an add

request receiving unit operable to receive a segment set add
request specifying (1) an add destination file and (2) a source
file including a segment set which is to be added to the add
destination file; a position information read unit operable to
5 read, from the position information storage unit, a piece of free
space position information indicating a position of a free space
of the specified add destination file; a segment set extract unit
operable to extract all segments included in the source file as a
segment set by referring to the pieces of segment position
10 information stored in the position information storage unit; and
a segment set add unit operable to add the extracted segment set
to the free space by referring to the read piece of free space
position information.

With the above construction, a segment set included in
15 a source file is written onto a portion (free space) excluding
segments in an add destination file when the segment set is added
to the add destination file. Accordingly, a new segment set can
be added to a file maintaining existent segments in the file.

The above object is also fulfilled by a file management
20 apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a
one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that
correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus
comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each
include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned
25 a timecode; a position information storage unit operable to store

pieces of free space position information that indicate positions of free spaces in the files, each segment being a set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes; an add request receiving unit operable to receive a file add request specifying (1) an add destination file and (2) a source file which is to be added to the add destination file; a position information read unit operable to read, from the position information storage unit, a piece of free space position information indicating a position of a free space of the specified add destination file; a file add unit operable to add the source file to the free space by referring to the read piece of free space position information.

With the above construction, a source file including segments is written onto a portion (free space) excluding segments in an add destination file when the source file is added to the add destination file. Accordingly, a new file including segments can be added to another file maintaining existent segments in the other file.

The above object is also fulfilled by a file management apparatus which stores and manages file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the file management apparatus comprising: a file storage unit operable to store files which each include one or more segments that are each a logical unit; a position information storage unit operable to store pieces of position information that indicate segment storage positions in

the file storage unit; an access request receiving unit operable to receive a segment partial set access request specifying a file name and a condition, each segment partial set being a set of one or more segments in one file; a position information read unit
5 operable to read, from the position information storage unit, pieces of position information corresponding to all segments belonging to the specified file and satisfying the specified condition, recognizing the read pieces of position information as a piece of position information of the requested segment partial
10 set; and a segment partial set access unit operable to access the segment partial set by referring to the piece of position information of the segment partial set.

With the above construction, not only the whole file but segment partial sets can be accessed, where each segment partial
15 set is a set of segments which belong to a specified file and satisfy a specified condition. With this arrangement, when a file includes a segment portion and other portions, only the segments that satisfy a desired condition can be extracted, copied, or transferred.

20 In the above file management apparatus, each file may include video data including portions that have each been assigned a timecode, and the file management apparatus further comprises: a segment identifying unit operable to recognize each set of video data portions having consecutive timecodes as a segment; and a
25 position information creating unit operable to create pieces of

position information that indicate storage positions of the identified segments in the file storage unit, and store the created pieces of position information in the position information storage unit.

5 With the above construction, each piece of video data can be identified by referring to its timecode. With this arrangement, the user need not specify a desired piece of video data in a file.

10 The above object is also fulfilled by a file management method or a computer-readable record medium recording a file management program.

15 As described above, the present invention is free from a limitation that data should be accessed in units of files as logical units. This provides a great practical effect since it provides more flexible data management.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

20 These and other objects, advantages and features of the invention will become apparent from the following description thereof taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings which illustrate a specific embodiment of the invention. In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of the file management apparatus in Embodiment 1;

FIG. 2 is a simplified figure showing the structure of a file including segments which are sequences of portions having consecutive timecodes;

FIGS. 3A and 3B show examples of segments arranged in
5 files;

FIG. 4 shows simplified contents of the file information;

FIG. 5 shows the segment information used to detect the position of each segment shown in FIG. 3;

10 FIG. 6 shows a rule for generating segment names;

FIG. 7 shows examples of generated segment names;

FIG. 8 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of a file transfer system being an application;

15 FIG. 9 shows a screen displayed on the display unit 605 of the FTP client 600;

FIG. 10 shows a screen displayed on the display unit 605 of the FTP client 600;

FIG. 11 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of moving-image editing system;

20 FIG. 12 is a flowchart showing an operation procedure of the file management apparatus;

FIG. 13 is a flowchart showing a procedure for creating the segment information;

25 FIG. 14 is a flowchart showing the procedure of providing a segment name;

FIG. 15 is a flowchart showing procedures of reading, overwriting, and adding segment data;

FIG. 16 shows the construction of the "Quiz" file after the segment data has been written therein;

5 FIG. 17 shows the segment information of the "Quiz" file;

FIG. 18 shows the construction of the "Quiz" file after the segment data has been written therein;

10 FIG. 19 shows the segment information of the "Quiz" file;

FIG. 20 shows an example of detailed segment information;

15 FIG. 21 shows an example where, based on the detailed segment information shown in FIG. 20, a name and detailed information are displayed for each segment and each file;

FIG. 22 shows another example of the rule for generating segment names;

20 FIG. 23 shows an example of the segment information in the case where segment names are stored in the segment information storage unit 103;

FIG. 24A shows the first table stored in the segment information storage unit 103;

FIG. 24B shows the second table stored in the segment information storage unit 103;

25 FIG. 25 is a functional block diagram showing the

construction of the file management apparatus in Embodiment 2;

FIGs. 26A and 26B show examples of segment sets arranged in files;

FIG. 27 is a flowchart showing an operation procedure of the file management apparatus in Embodiment 2;

FIG. 28 a flowchart showing the procedure of providing a segment set name;

FIG. 29 is a flowchart showing procedures of reading, overwriting, and adding segment set data;

FIG. 30A shows segments included in the "Quiz" file stored in the file management apparatus 100 of the FTP server 601 shown in FIG. 8;

FIG. 30B shows a segment set which is output to the FTP application 610 and stored in the storage unit 604 of the FTP client 600;

FIG. 31 shows the construction of the "Quiz" file after the segment set data has been written therein;

FIG. 32 shows the segment information of the "Quiz" file after an update;

FIG. 33 shows the construction of the "Quiz" file after the segment set data has been written therein;

FIG. 34 shows the updated segment information of the "Quiz" file;

FIG. 35 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of the file management apparatus in Embodiment 3;

FIG. 36 is a flowchart showing an operation procedure of the file management apparatus in Embodiment 3;

FIG. 37 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of the file management apparatus in Embodiment 4;

5 FIG. 38A shows the construction of a file including segments;

FIG. 38B shows the segment information;

FIG. 38C shows the segment partial set data read instruction;

10 FIG. 38D shows the segment partial set output to the FTP application 610 and stored in the storage unit 604 of the FTP client 600; and

FIG. 39 is a flowchart showing a procedure for reading a segment partial set in Embodiment 4.

15 DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The following are description of the present invention through specific embodiments thereof by way of referring to the drawings.

<Embodiment 1>

20 Embodiment 1 relates to a file management apparatus which specifies a logical unit (segment) constituting a file, reads, overwrites, or adds data in units of segments, and specifies a segment by the segment name thereof.

<Construction>

FIG. 1 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of the file management apparatus in the present embodiment. As shown in FIG. 1, the file management apparatus 100 in the present embodiment includes an input unit 101, a file information storage unit 102, a segment information storage unit 103, a segment name generation unit 104, a segment name output unit 105, a segment identification unit 119, a segment position detection unit 106, a segment access unit 107, and a file storage unit 108. Upon receipt of, from an application unit 120, a request to obtain a segment name, the file management apparatus 100 obtains the segment name and sends the obtained segment name to the application unit 120. Also, upon receipt of, from the application unit 120, a request to access (read or write) segment data with a segment name, the file management apparatus 100 reads or writes the segment data.

FIG. 1 shows the components of the file management apparatus 100 based on the functions thereof. In reality, however, the file management apparatus 100 is composed of hardware including a CPU, a memory, and a hard disk, and an Operating System (OS) executed on the hardware. More specifically, the input unit 101, segment identification unit 119, segment position detection unit 106, segment access unit 107, segment name generation unit 104, segment name output unit 105, a segment information generation unit 115, and a file information generation unit 116 represent functions of the OS executed on the hardware,

and the file information storage unit 102, segment information storage unit 103, and file storage unit 108 represent a part of a storage area in the hard disk.

5 The application unit 120 reads or writes data in units of segments using the file management apparatus 100. The application unit 120 sends a request to obtain a segment name to the file management apparatus 100, and receives a segment name from the file management apparatus 100. The application unit 120 also sends a request to read segment data specifying a segment
10 name to the file management apparatus 100, and receives the requested segment data from the file management apparatus 100. The application unit 120 also sends a request to write segment data specifying a segment name to the file management apparatus 100, and outputs the requested segment data to the file management
15 apparatus 100.

The application unit 120 sends a segment access request to the file management apparatus of the present embodiment by specifying a segment name in much the same way as conventional applications access a file using a file name. As a result, by
20 merely adding an extended function (a function for outputting an instruction to detect a segment which will be described later) to a conventional application for accessing conventional files, the conventional application can be used as the application unit 120 for using the file management apparatus of the present
25 embodiment.

The input unit 101 receives, from the application unit 120, a request to obtain a segment name and a request to read or write segment data specifying a segment name.

The file storage unit 108 stores file data. Each file includes one or more segments. Here, "segment" indicates a group of consecutive areas which have a logical meaning as one unit in the file. In the case of a file storing moving-image data, for example, a sequence of portions in the file having consecutive timecodes are recognized as a segment. FIG. 2 is a simplified figure showing the structure of a file including segments, or sequences of portions having consecutive timecodes. As shown in FIG. 2, each segment is composed of a header and a plurality of frames, and has one timecode. The timecodes included in one segment are consecutive. Here, each header includes information indicating a format of the moving-image data, an image size, etc. Each frame includes a timecode 201 and image data 202. It is supposed that 30 frames of moving-image data are reproduced per second, and that the timecode 201 represents the time in a format of "hour (0-23): minute (0-59): second (0-59): frame number (0-29)". Here, a sequence of two non-consecutive frame numbers indicates that the gap between the two frames is a gap between two segments.

FIGs. 3A and 3B show examples of segments arranged in files. Each file has a fixed size of 150MB, and one or more segments are written in arbitrary positions in a file. As shown

in FIG. 3A, the "Sports" file includes three segments. Also, as shown in FIG. 3B, the "Quiz" file includes two segments. Here, free spaces 300 to 302 are "portions other than segments", that is to say, "portions which do not form a logical unit". "Unassigned
5 spaces" (300 and 302) among the free spaces (300 to 302) are spaces located at the end of files. A segment may be newly created in these unassigned spaces.

In the "Sports" file shown in FIG. 3A, the boundary between the segment 1 and segment 2 is recognized to be between
10 non-consecutive timecodes (10:24:12:07 and 10:27:05:13), and the boundary between the segment 2 and segment 3 between non-consecutive timecodes (10:31:14:19 and 13:48:07:15). In the "Quiz" file shown in FIG. 3B, the end of the segment 1 is adjacent to a free space having no timecode, and the start and the end of the
15 segment 2 are adjacent to free spaces.

The file information storage unit 102 stores directory information which is information of files stored in the file storage unit 108. FIG. 4 shows simplified contents of the file information. As shown in FIG. 4, the file information at least
20 includes, for each file stored in the file storage unit 108, a file name, a storage position in the storage apparatus, and a creation date. Although in reality, the file information (directory information) includes other information, the details are omitted here.

25 The file information generation unit 116 updates the

creation date in the file information after receiving notification from the segment access unit 107 that writing a piece of segment data has completed.

5 The segment information storage unit 103 stores segment information for each segment. Each piece of segment information is composed of (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs, and (2) position information which shows a relative position of the segment in the file. Each piece of position information is composed of (1) a start address offset which is a
10 length between the start of the file and the start of the segment, and (2) a segment length. FIG. 5 shows the segment information used to detect the position of each segment shown in FIG. 3. In FIG. 5, a piece of segment information of a segment (segment 1) nearest to the start of the "Sports" file is composed of the file
15 name (Sports), start address offset (0), and segment length (29 M).

The segment information generation unit 115, after a file is newly created, detects segments in the file, creates segment information composed of the file name, start address
20 offset, and segment length for each detected segment, and stores the created segment information in the segment information storage unit 103. For example, in the case of a file storing moving-image data, sequences of portions having consecutive timecodes are recognized as segments. With this construction, even if a user
25 has recorded a plurality of pieces of segment data into a file,

not recognizing them as segment data but as file data, the file management apparatus by itself detects gaps between segments in the file, creates segment information, and stores the created segment information into the segment information storage unit 103.

The segment information generation unit 115, after receiving notification from the segment access unit 107 that writing a piece of segment data has completed, and receiving the start address offset and segment length of the piece of segment data, updates the segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103. This enables the segment data stored in the segment information storage unit 103 to be updated even if a user writes segment data into a file without recognizing it as segment data.

The segment name generation unit 104 generates segment names for the segments currently stored in the segment information storage unit 103. FIG. 6 shows a rule for generating segment names. According to the rule, each segment name the segment name generation unit 104 generates must be composed of (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs, and (2) a serial number of the segment in the file which is assigned in order of storage in the file. FIG. 7 shows examples of segment names. As shown in FIG. 7, starting from the first segment in the file in order, the segments of the "Sports" file are assigned segment names "Sports1", "Sports2", and "Sports3". Similarly, the segments of the "Quiz"

file are assigned segment names "Quiz1" and "Quiz2" in order. It should be noted here that a numeral is not used as the last character of the file name to avoid confusion between a file name and a segment name.

5 The segment name output unit 105 outputs a segment name generated by the segment name generation unit 104 to the application unit 120.

10 The segment identification unit 119 identifies segments by analyzing, using the rule shown in FIG. 6, segment names sent from the input unit 101. More specifically, the segment identification unit 119 decomposes each segment name into a file name and a segment serial number, and sends the file name and the segment serial number to the segment position detection unit 106.

15 Also, in the case of writing segment data, to judge whether it is overwriting or addition, the segment identification unit 119 refers to the segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103 to check if the specified segment has already been stored in it, and sends the check result to the
20 segment position detection unit 106. For example, if a write instruction specifying "Sports2" as the segment name is received when segments 1 to 3 are actually stored in the "Sports" file, the segment identification unit 119 sends a check result that the specified segment has already been stored. Also, if a write
25 instruction specifying "Sports10" as the segment name is received

in the same conditions, the segment identification unit 119 sends a check result that the specified segment is not stored. This is because although the "Sports" file is stored, the 10th segment is not stored.

5 When the segment identification unit 119 receives a segment access request specifying a segment and cannot find the file that should include the specified segment, the segment identification unit 119 rejects the access request since it cannot write the specified segment.

10 The segment position detection unit 106 refers to the file information storage unit 102 and the segment storage unit 103 to identify a position where a segment is to be read, overwritten, or added. More specifically, the segment position detection unit 106 first reads, from the file information storage unit 102, the
15 starting storage position of a file corresponding to a file name.

 In the case of reading segment data, the segment position detection unit 106 then reads, from the segment information storage unit 103, the start address offset and the
20 segment length of the segment identified by the segment serial number, detects the start storage position (absolute address) and the end storage position (absolute address) of the segment using the read start address offset and segment length and the start storage position of the file, and recognizes the range between the
25 start storage position and the end storage position as the segment

reading position.

In the case of writing segment data, when receiving notification from the segment identification unit 119 that the specified segment has already been stored in the storage unit, the segment position detection unit 106 detects the position where the segment should be overwritten. More specifically, the segment position detection unit 106 then reads, from the segment information storage unit 103, the start address offset of the segment and the start address offset of the next segment (this is not read if it is not stored), detects the start storage position (absolute address) of the segment and a storage position (absolute address) immediately before the start storage position of the next segment (in case the next segment is not stored, the end storage position of the segment), and recognizes the range between the start storage position of the segment and the storage position immediately before the start storage position of the next segment (in case the next segment is not stored, the end storage position of the segment) as the segment overwriting position.

In the case of writing segment data, when receiving notification from the segment identification unit 119 that the specified segment is not stored in the storage unit, the segment position detection unit 106 reads, from the segment information storage unit 103, the start address offset and the segment length of the unassigned space in the file, detects the start storage position (absolute address) and the end storage position (absolute

address) of the unassigned space using the read start address offset and segment length and the start storage position of the file, and recognizes the range between the start storage position and the end storage position of the unassigned space as the segment adding position.

The segment access unit 107 executes reading, overwriting, or adding of segment data as follows at the reading, writing, or adding position detected by the segment position detection unit 106.

10 In the case of reading segment data, the segment access unit 107 reads the specified segment from the reading position in the file storage unit 108, and outputs the read segment to the application unit 120.

15 In the case of overwriting segment data, the segment access unit 107 overwrites the segment data sent from the application unit 120 onto the overwriting position for the specified segment in the file storage unit 108. It is also possible to write segment data into a free space between segments.

20 In the case of adding segment data, the segment access unit 107 writes the segment data sent from the application unit 120 onto the adding position for the specified segment in the file storage unit 108 as additional data.

25 The segment access unit 107, upon receipt of an instruction from the application unit 120 via the input unit 101

to end writing, ends writing the segment data, notifies the
segment information generation unit 115 and the file information
generation unit 116 that the writing has completed, and sends the
start address offset and segment length of the written segment to
5 the segment information generation unit 115.

<Application Example 1>

The following is a description of an application which
uses the file management apparatus of the present embodiment.
FIG. 8 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of
10 a file transfer system that is an application using the file
management apparatus. Although the application actually transfers
segments, not files, the application is called "file transfer
system" since it has almost the same construction as a conventional
file transfer system except the file management apparatus. As
15 shown in FIG. 8, the file transfer system includes an FTP
application 610 and the file management apparatus 100 of the
present embodiment. The FTP application 610 includes an FTP
client 600 and a part of an FTP server 601.

The FTP client 600 is composed of an input unit 602, a
20 communication unit 603, a storage unit 604, and a display unit
605. The FTP server 601 is composed of the file management
apparatus 100 and a communication unit 606.

The input unit 602 of the FTP client 600 receives a
request to obtain a segment name from a user. The user requests
25 this by inputting "Dir" on a keyboard. The input unit 602 sends

the segment name obtainment request to the FTP server 601 via the communication units 603 and 606. The FTP server 601 sends the segment name obtainment request to the file management apparatus 100. In response to this, the file management apparatus 100
5 outputs a segment name. The segment name is sent to the FTP client 600 via the communication units 603 and 606, and displayed on the display unit 605 of the FTP client 600. FIG. 9 shows a screen displayed on the display unit 605 of the FTP client 600.

The input unit 602 of the FTP client 600 receives a
10 request to read segment data from a user. The user requests this by inputting "Get_--- (a desired segment name)" on a keyboard. The input unit 602 sends the segment data read request to the FTP server 601 via the communication units 603 and 606. The FTP server 601 sends the segment data read request specifying the
15 segment name to the file management apparatus 100. In response to this, the file management apparatus 100 outputs the segment data. The segment data is sent to the FTP client 600 via the communication units 603 and 606, and stored in the storage unit 604 of the FTP client 600. Also, the display unit 605 of the FTP
20 client 600 displays a message indicating that the file transfer has completed. FIG. 10 shows a screen displayed on the display unit 605 of the FTP client 600.

<Application Example 2>

In this section, an application of the present invention
25 to a moving-image editing system will be described. The moving-

image editing system records moving-images captured by a video camera into the file management apparatus.

FIG. 11 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of moving-image editing system. As shown in FIG. 11, the moving-image editing system is composed of a video camera 810, a moving-image editing application 800, and the file management apparatus 100 of the present embodiment.

The moving-image editing application 800 is composed of an input unit 802, a video input unit 801, and a display unit 803.

The input unit 802 of the moving-image editing application 800, upon receipt of a key input "DetectSeg" by a user as a request to detect a segment, sends the segment detection request to the file management apparatus 100. When receiving the segment detection request, the file management apparatus 100 detects the segment from a file, and creates segment information.

The input unit 802 of the moving-image editing application 800, upon receipt of a key input "Dir" by a user as a request to obtain a segment name, sends the segment name obtainment request to the file management apparatus 100. When receiving the segment name obtainment request, the file management apparatus 100 outputs the segment name. The display unit 803 displays the segment name.

The input unit 802 of the moving-image editing

application 800, upon receipt of a key input "Rec_--- (a desired segment name)" by a user as a request to write segment data, sends the segment data write request specifying the segment name to the file management apparatus 100, and at the same time, instructs the video input unit 801 to input a video signal. The video input unit 801 inputs and digitizes the video signal which is sent from the video camera 810, and sends the digital data to the file management apparatus 100. The file management apparatus 100 writes the received digital data onto the specified segment. The input unit 802, upon receipt of a key input "Rec_complete" by the user as an instruction to end writing the segment data, sends the segment data writing end instruction to the file management apparatus 100, and at the same time, instructs the video input unit 801 to end inputting the video signal. When receiving this instruction, the file management apparatus 100 ends writing the segment data.

When receiving a key input "Play_--- (a desired segment name)", namely a segment data read request from the user, the input unit 802 sends the segment data read request specifying the segment name to the file management apparatus 100. In response to this, the file management apparatus 100 reads and outputs the specified segment data, then the display unit 803 displays the segment data, namely video data.

<Operation>

Now, the operation of the file management apparatus when

the application unit 120 is either the above file transfer system or the moving-image editing system will be described.

FIG. 12 is a flowchart showing an operation procedure of the file management apparatus 100. It is supposed in FIG. 12 that initially, the file storage unit 108 stores the files shown in FIG. 2 and the file information storage unit 102 stores the file information shown in FIG. 4.

When the input unit 101 receives, from the application unit 120, instruction "DetectSeg" which is an instruction to detect a segment from a file, the segment information is created (steps S701, S702).

When the input unit 101 receives, from the application unit 120, instruction "Dir" which is an instruction to obtain a segment name, the segment name is provided (steps S703, S704).

When the input unit 101 receives, from the application unit 120, instruction "Get_Sports1" which is an instruction to read segment data or instruction "Rec_Quiz1" which is an instruction to write segment data, the segment data is read or written (steps S705, S706).

<Creation of Segment Information> (Application to Moving-Image Editing System)

First, the operation of creating the segment information will be described.

FIG. 13 is a flowchart showing a procedure for creating the segment information. First, the segment information creation

unit 115 reads a file from the file storage unit 108 (step S1301).

The segment information creation unit 115 then checks whether the file includes a start of a segment. That is, the
5 segment information creation unit 115 sequentially checks the file from its start to see whether the file has a header of moving-image data (step S1302).

When the above check ends up in reaching the end of the file, the segment information creation unit 115 creates the
10 segment information for the unassigned space. More specifically, the segment information creation unit 115 detects the start address offset of the unassigned space as an address immediately after the end of the last segment (when the file does not include a segment, the start address of the file, i.e., "0"), and detects
15 the length of the unassigned space and recognizes it as a length between the start address offset to the end of the file, and writes these pieces of information to the segment information storage unit 103 (steps S1303, S1304).

When the above check in step S1302 ends up in finding
20 a header of moving-image data, the segment information creation unit 115 writes the start of the header into the segment information storage unit 103 as the start address offset of the segment. In the case of the "Quiz" file show in FIG. 2, the start address offset of the segment 1 is "0", and the start address
25 offset of the segment 2 is "60 M" (steps S1305, S1306).

The segment information creation unit 115 then searches for the end of the segment. More specifically, the segment information creation unit 115 searches the file sequentially from the start of the segment towards the end of the file for a
5 timecode missing portion which is either a discontinuity of timecodes or a portion that does not include a timecode (indicating that the portion does not belong to a moving-image frame) (step S1307).

When the above check ends up in reaching the end of the
10 file, the segment information creation unit 115 recognizes the end of the file as the end of the segment, calculates the length between the start and end of the segment, and writes the calculated length to the segment information storage unit 103 as the segment length (steps S1308, S1309).

When the above check in step S1307 ends up in finding
15 a timecode missing portion, the segment information creation unit 115 recognizes the end of the segment as immediately before the timecode missing portion (the end of a timecode consecutive portion), calculates the length between the start and end of the
20 segment, and writes the calculated length to the segment information storage unit 103 as the segment length. In the case of the "Quiz" file shown in FIG. 2, the segment 1 ends with the 798th frame and the length of the segment 1 is recognized as 40 M since the 799th frame cannot be found at 40 M and onwards. Also,
25 the segment 2 ends with the 598th frame and the length of the

segment 2 is recognized as 30 M since the 599th frame cannot be found at 90 M and onwards (steps S1310, S1311). As a result of the above operation, the segment information shown in FIG. 5 is created.

- 5 <Providing Segment Name> (Application to FTP Application or Moving-Image Editing System)

Now, the operation for providing a segment name will be described. FIG. 14 is a flowchart showing the procedure of providing a segment name.

- 10 First, the input unit 101 sends the segment name obtainment instruction (Dir) to the segment name generation unit 104. The segment name generation unit 104 refers to the segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103 to generate a segment name for each existent segment in accordance with the rule for generating segment names. More specifically, the segment name generation unit 104 generates segment names which each are composed of (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs, and (2) a serial number of the segment in the file which is assigned in order of storage in the file. In this example, the segment name generation unit 104 refers to the segment information shown in FIG. 5 and detects that the "Sports" file includes segments 1 to 3, and generates segment names "Sports1", "Sports2", and "Sports3" for the three segments. Also, the segment name generation unit 104 detects that the "Quiz" file includes segments 1 and 2, and generates segment names "Quiz1" and
- 15
- 20
- 25

"Quiz2" for the two segments (step S3801).

The segment name output unit 105 outputs the generated segment names to the application (step S3802). As a result of the above operation, the application unit 120 displays the segment names sent from the file management apparatus 100, as shown in FIG. 9.

Now, the operation of reading and writing the segment data will be described. FIG. 15 is a flowchart showing procedures of reading, overwriting, and adding segment data.

10 <Reading Segment Data> (Application to FTP Application)

The input unit 101, after receiving a segment data reading instruction ("Get_Sports1") from the FTP application 610, sends the instruction to the segment identification unit 119. The segment identification unit 119 identifies the segment by analyzing the segment name in the instruction in accordance with the rule for generating segment names. More specifically, the segment identification unit 119 analyzes the segment name to identify the file ("Sports") to which the segment belongs and a serial storage-order number of the segment in the file (the first) (steps S1000, S1001).

The segment position detection unit 106 reads, from the file information storage unit 102 and segment information storage unit 103, the start storage position of the file ("Sports") to which the segment belongs, the start address offset ("0" byte) of the segment 1, and the segment length (20MB), detects the start

storage position (absolute address) and the end storage position (absolute address) of the segment, and recognizes the range between the start storage position and the end storage position as the segment reading position (step S1002).

5 The segment access unit 107 reads the segment data from the segment reading position in the file storage unit 108 detected in step S1002, and outputs the read segment data to the FTP application 610 (step S1003).

<Overwriting Segment Data> (Application to Moving-Image Editing
10 System)

 The input unit 101, after receiving a segment data writing instruction ("Rec_Quiz1") from the moving-image editing application 800, sends the instruction to the segment identification unit 119. The segment identification unit 119
15 identifies the segment by analyzing the segment name in the instruction in accordance with the rule for generating segment names. More specifically, the segment identification unit 119 analyzes the segment name ("Quiz1") to identify the file ("Quiz") to which the segment belongs and a serial storage-order number of
20 the segment in the file (the first), and at the same time, refers to the segment information in the segment information storage unit 103 to check if the "Quiz" file has already included the segment 1, and sends the check result to the segment position detection unit 106. In this example, since the "Quiz" file includes the
25 segment 1, it is judged that the "Quiz" file has already included

the segment 1 (steps S1004, S1005).

The segment position detection unit 106 reads, from the file information storage unit 102 and segment information storage unit 103, the start storage position of the "Quiz" file to which the segment belongs, the start address offset of the segment 1, and the start address offset of the segment 2, detects the start storage position (absolute address) of the segment 1 and a storage position (absolute address) immediately before the start storage position of the segment 2, and recognizes the range between these positions as the segment overwriting position (step S1006).

The segment access unit 107 writes the segment data received from the moving-image editing application 800 onto the detected segment overwriting position in the file storage unit 108. The segment access unit 107 stops writing the segment data after receiving the writing end instruction ("Rec_complete") from the moving-image editing application 800 via the input unit 101, notifies the segment information generation unit 115 and the file information generation unit 116 that the writing has completed, and sends the start address offset and segment length of the written segment to the segment information generation unit 115. FIG. 16 shows the construction of the "Quiz" file after the segment data has been written therein. As shown in FIG. 16, a piece of 55MB segment data has been written starting from the start address offset ("0" byte) of the former segment 1, and has become the new segment 1 ("0" byte to "55MB"). For achieving this, a part of the

original free space ("40MB" to "60MB") has been used (step S1007).

The segment information generation unit 115 updates the segment information in the segment information storage unit 103 based on the start address offset and the segment length of the written segment which are sent from the segment access unit 107. More specifically, the segment information generation unit 115 changes the segment length of the segment 1 from "40MB" to "55MB". FIG. 17 shows the segment information of the "Quiz" file. As shown in FIG. 17, the segment length of the segment 1 is currently "55MB" which was "40MB" before (step S1008).

The file information generation unit 116 updates the file information stored in the file information storage unit 102. That is to say, the file information generation unit 116 changes the "Sports" file creation date to the time when the writing of the segment data completed (step S1009).

<Adding Segment Data> (Application to Moving-Image Editing System)

The input unit 101, after receiving a segment data writing instruction ("Rec_Quiz3") from the moving-image editing application 800, sends the instruction to the segment identification unit 119. The segment identification unit 119 identifies the segment by analyzing the segment name in the instruction in accordance with the rule for generating segment names. More specifically, the segment identification unit 119

analyzes the segment name ("Quiz3") to identify the file ("Quiz") to which the segment belongs and a serial storage-order number of the segment in the file (the third), and at the same time, refers to the segment information in the segment information storage unit 103 to check if the "Quiz" file has already included the segment 3. In this example, since the "Quiz" file does not include the segment 3, it is judged that the "Quiz" file does not include the segment 3 (steps S1004, S1005).

The segment position detection unit 106 reads, from the file information storage unit 102 and segment information storage unit 103, the start storage position of the "Quiz" file, and the start address offset and the segment length of the unassigned space of the "Quiz" file, detects the start storage position (absolute address) and the end storage position (absolute address) of the unassigned space, and recognizes the range between these positions as the segment adding position (step S1010).

The segment access unit 107 writes the segment data received from the moving-image editing application 800 onto the detected segment adding position in the file storage unit 108.

The segment access unit 107 stops writing the segment data after receiving the writing end instruction from the moving-image editing application 800 via the input unit 101, and notifies the segment information generation unit 115 and the file information generation unit 116 that the writing has completed. FIG. 18 shows the construction of the "Quiz" file after the segment data has been

written therein. As shown in FIG. 18, a piece of 40MB segment data has been written starting from the start address offset ("90MB") of the former unassigned space, and has become the new segment 3 ("90MB" to "130MB") (step S1011).

5 As is the case with the above-described overwriting, the segment information generation unit 115 updates the segment information in the segment information storage unit 103, and the file information generation unit 116 updates the file information stored in the file information storage unit 102.

10 FIG. 19 shows the segment information of the "Quiz" file. As shown in FIG. 19, information of the segment 3 has been added to the segment information.

<Summary of Embodiment 1>

As described above, the file management apparatus 100
15 of the present embodiment operates as follows. When a user sends a segment name obtainment request to the apparatus via an application, the segment name generation unit 104 refers to the segment information storage unit 103 to generate a segment name for each existent segment in accordance with the rule for
20 generating segment names, and sends the generated segment name to the user via the application. Also, upon receipt of a request to access a segment specifying the segment name via the application, the file management apparatus identifies the segment by analyzing the segment name in accordance with the rule for generating
25 segment names, refers to the file information storage unit 102 and

the segment information storage unit 103 to detect the segment storage position, then accesses the segment. With this construction of the file management apparatus of the present embodiment, it is possible to access a segment with a simple operation of specifying a segment name, in much the same way as conventional methods access a file by specifying a file name. This reduces the burden on the user.

Also, due to the commonality between the present invention and conventional methods in the methods of specifying access targets, it is substantially possible to allow a conventional application, which accesses a file by specifying a file name, to be used as an application using the file management apparatus of the present invention, by merely adding to the conventional application a function to output an instruction to detect a segment from a file.

Also, since the file management apparatus of the present invention can detect each segment in a file, the user need not record each logical unit as a file with a file name, but has only to record such logical files in a file. This reduces the burden on the user.

Up to this point, the file management apparatus in Embodiment 1 of the present invention has been described. The present invention, however, is not limited to the above embodiment, and can be varied as follows.

(1) Segment Information

In the present embodiment, as shown in FIG. 5, each piece of segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103 includes a start address offset and a segment length. The segment information, however, may include more detailed information. FIG. 20 shows an example of detailed segment information. As shown in this drawing, when portions of moving image data having consecutive timecodes are regarded as segments, each piece of segment information may include a piece of timecode information (composed of a start time and an end time) for each segment.

(2) Segment Name Obtainment Request

In the present embodiment, as shown in FIG. 9, only a segment name is displayed in response to a segment name obtainment request "dir". However, a file name may be displayed, in addition to a segment name. Also, when the segment information storage unit 103 stores detailed segment information, the detailed information may be displayed. FIG. 21 shows an example where, based on the detailed segment information shown in FIG. 20, a name and detailed information are displayed for each segment and each file. As shown in FIG. 21, the names of the three segments in the "Sports" file and the two segments in the "Quiz" file (Sports1, Sports2, Sports3, Quiz1, and Quiz2) and each segment length, start time, and end time are displayed in relation to segments, and the file names (Sports and Quiz), and each file length, start time, and end time are displayed in relation to files. Here, the file

start time is the earliest time among the segment start times of the file, and the file end time is the latest time among the segment end times of the file.

(3) Overwriting Segments

5 In the file management apparatus 100 of the present embodiment, the segment position detection unit 106 recognizes a range between the start storage position of a specified segment and the storage position immediately before the start storage position of the next segment as the segment overwriting position, 10 so that the segment access unit 107 can write segment data into a free space adjacent the former segment, as well as onto the former segment. The overwriting of segment data, however, is not limited to this.

For example, the segment position detection unit 106 may 15 recognize a range between the start address and the end address of a specified segment as the segment overwriting position, so that the segment access unit 107 can write segment data within this range, that is to say, not to exceed the former segment.

Alternatively, the segment position detection unit 106 20 may recognize the former segment and a part of another segment as the segment overwriting position, so that the segment access unit 107 can write segment data within this range. In this case: if the rest of the other segment maintains a logical unit after the segment data has been written, the rest of the other segment may 25 be dealt with as a segment as before; and if the rest of the other

segment does not maintain a logical unit any more after, the rest of the other segment may be dealt with as a free space.

(4) Adding Segments

In the file management apparatus 100 of the present embodiment, the segment position detection unit 106 recognizes a range between the start address and the end address of the unassigned space (a free space at the end of a file, not a free space between segments) as the segment adding position, so that the segment access unit 107 can additionally write segment data into the segment adding position. The additional writing of segment data, however, is not limited to this. For example, the segment position detection unit 106 may recognize even a free space between segments as the segment adding position if the size of the free space is larger than a certain size. Also, when a segment is added to an unassigned space and when the size of the segment is larger than the size of the unassigned space, data may be written so as not to exceed the file size, or may be written to exceed the file size, namely written to the unassigned space and to a space which is outside the file and adjacent to the unassigned space.

(5) Segment Name

In the file management apparatus 100 of the present embodiment, the rule for generating segment names is that each segment name must be composed of (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs, and (2) a serial number of the segment

in the file which is assigned in order of storage in the file. The rule, however, is not limited to the above one. FIG. 22 shows another example of the rule for generating segment names. As shown in FIG. 22, the rule states that each segment name must be composed of (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs, and (2) an uppercase alphabet indicating a serial storage-order number of the segment in the file. According to this rule, the segment name of the segment 1 of the "Sports" file is "SportsA", and the segment name of the segment 2 of the "Quiz" file is "QuizB", for example. Alternatively, the rule may state that each segment address is composed of (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs, and (2) the start address offset and the end address offset of the segment. According to this rule, the segment name of the segment 1 ("0" to "20MB") of the "Sports" file is "Sports0-20", and the segment name of the segment 2 ("20MB" to "70MB") of the "Sports" file is "Sports20-70", for example.

In the present embodiment, the segment name generation unit 104 generates a segment name in accordance with the rule for generating segment names, upon receipt of a request to obtain a segment name. Furthermore, the segment identification unit 119 detects a segment by analyzing the segment name in accordance with the rule for generating segment names. These operations, however, may be achieved in different ways. For example, the segment information storage unit 103 may store generated segment names. To achieve this, the segment information generation unit 115 may

create segment position information, and the segment name generation unit 104 may generate a segment name in accordance with the rule for generating segment names, then the generated segment information and segment name may be stored in the segment information storage unit 103 in a manner that their correspondence is shown. Alternatively, the rule for generating segment names may not be used. Instead, the file management apparatus may include a means for allowing the user to create arbitrary segment names so that the segment names are stored in the segment information storage unit 103. FIG. 23 shows an example of the segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103 in this case. As shown in FIG. 23, the segment information include segment names created by the user.

As in another variation, the segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103 may include a first table and a second table, the first table showing the segment position information, and the second table showing relationships between (1) segment names, (2) file names of file to which the segments belong, and (3) serial numbers of the segments in the files which are assigned in order of storage in the files, where (2) and (3) are specified by (1). FIG. 24A shows the first table which shows the segment position information. FIG. 24B shows the second table showing relationships between (1) segment names, (2) file names of file to which the segments belong, and (3) serial numbers of the segments in the files which are assigned in order

of storage in the files, where (2) and (3) are specified by (1).
As shown in FIG. 24B, when a segment name "tennis" is specified,
for example, it is found by referring to the second table that the
segment name represents the second segment of the "Sports" file,
5 and the position information of the segment ("20M" to "50M") is
found by referring to the first table.

With the above construction, when a segment name
obtainment request is issued, instead of generating the requested
segment name in accordance with the rule for generating segment
10 names, the requested segment name is read from the segment
information storage unit 103, and the read segment name is output.
Also, when a request for accessing a segment specifying a segment
name is issued, the segment identification unit 119 does not
identify the segment and the file including the segment by
15 analyzing the specified segment name using the rule for generating
segment names, but the segment position information corresponding
to the specified segment name is read from the segment information
storage unit 103.

In the present embodiment, segments are accessed by way
20 of specifying segment names since it is thought to be desirable
that the segment accessing method is close to an existent method
used by existent applications in which files are accessed by way
of specifying file names. However, in the case of video data to
which timecodes are assigned, each segment may be accessed by way
25 of specifying a file name and an access start timecode.

(6) Segment Addresses

In the present embodiment, the start address offset and the segment length included in the segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103 of the file management apparatus 100 are represented by bytes. The start address offset and the segment length, however, may be represented using other units. For example, they may be represented by frame numbers when segments are moving-image data. Also, the position information in the segment information may be composed of a start address offset and an end address offset, instead of a start address offset and a segment length.

(7) File Length

In the present embodiment, the files stored in the file storage unit 108 of the file management apparatus 100 have fixed length. The files, however, are not limited to the fixed length. For example, the files may have variable-length so that the files may extend as segment data is added thereto.

(8) Timing for Generating Segment Information

In the present embodiment, the segment information generation unit 115 of the file management apparatus 100 creates segment information and stores the created segment information in the segment information storage unit 103 after a file is newly created or after it is notified by the segment access unit 107 that writing of a piece of segment data has completed. This, however, may be differently performed. For example, the segment

information generation unit 115, independent of writing segment data, may detect a logical unit in a file every certain time period, recognize it as a segment, and create a piece of segment information (composed of a start address offset and an end address
5 offset) corresponding to the segment.

Alternatively, segment data in files, file information, and segment information may be created by an apparatus different from the file management apparatus 100, then the created segment data, file information, and segment information may be taken in
10 for use by the file storage unit 108, file information storage unit 102, and segment information storage unit 103 of the file management apparatus 100.

In the present embodiment, it is supposed that file storage addresses are consecutive. However, even when file
15 storage addresses are non-consecutive since the files are stored in fragments of the file storage area in the file information storage unit, it is possible to access each segment by storing in the segment information storage unit 103 each pair of a fragment start address offset and its length as the segment position
20 information. This is because it is possible to access a segment based on the position information.

(9) Segment Name Output

In the present embodiment, the segment name output unit 105 of the file management apparatus outputs only segment names
25 generated by the segment name generation unit 104 to the

application unit 120. This may be achieved by a different method. For example, the segment name output unit 105 may read the start address offset and the end address offset of the segment from the segment information storage unit 103, and output the addresses and
5 the segment name to the application unit 120. Also, the segment name output unit 105, when a segment is a sequence of pieces of moving-image data having consecutive timecodes, may read the first frame of the segment from the file storage unit 108, and output the read frame to the application unit 120 so that the application
10 unit 120 displays the frame (still picture).

(10) Application Examples

In the present embodiment, applications relating to file transfers or recording are introduced as the applications that can use the file management apparatus of the present embodiment.
15 However, other applications such as an application for reproducing moving images can use the file management apparatus of the present embodiment.

(11) Segments

In the present embodiment, a sequence of pieces of video
20 data having consecutive timecodes are recognized as a segment. Conditions for defining the segment, however, are not limited to video data nor timecodes. For example, a sequence of pieces of measurement data having consecutive measurement timecodes may be recognized as a segment. Also, a sequence of pieces of data
25 having consecutive serial numbers (e.g., ID numbers for database)

may be recognized as a segment.

Also, any meaning-based logical unit or format-based logical unit may be regarded as a segment. For example, change of scenes in moving-image data may be detected so that each scene is regarded as a segment (meaning-based logical unit). Also, each of a plurality of chapters constituting text data may be regarded as a segment (format-based logical unit).

(12) Obtaining Files, File Information, or Segment Information

In the present embodiment, files and file information are stored beforehand. Files and file information, however, may be obtained from outside to be stored inside. Also, in the present embodiment, segment information is created by the apparatus of the embodiment, but it also may be obtained from outside to be stored inside.

<Embodiment 2>

Embodiment 2 relates to a file management apparatus that reads, overwrites, or adds data in units of segment set data, where each segment set is composed of all segments included in a file. The present embodiment is suitable for the case where the user wants to copy or transfer all the segments in a file when the file includes segment portions and other portions, each segment being a logical unit.

<Construction>

FIG. 25 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of the file management apparatus in the present

embodiment.

The file storage unit 108, file information storage unit 102, and segment information storage unit 103 of the present embodiment are the same as Embodiment 1. The following is a
5 description of components that are different from Embodiment 1.

The application unit 2120 reads or writes data in units of segment sets using the file management apparatus 2100. The application unit 2120, for example, can substantially be achieved by a conventional FTP program which performs a conventional file
10 transfer process (except that the application unit 2120 additionally has a function to detect a segment). It should be noted here that a segment set is composed of all segments in a file. FIGs. 24A and 24B show examples of segment sets in files. As shown in FIG. 26A, the segment set 2201 of the "Sports" file is
15 composed of three segments. As shown in FIG. 26B, the segment set 2202 of the "Quiz" file is composed of two segments.

The input unit 2101 receives a segment set name obtainment request and a segment set data read, overwrite, or adding request specifying a segment set from the application unit
20 2120.

The segment set name generation unit 2104 refers to the segment information storage unit 103 to check whether a segment has already been stored (i.e., whether a segment set has already been stored), and generates segment set names for the segment sets
25 currently stored in the segment information storage unit 103. The

segment set name is composed of a file name of a file to which the segment belongs, and a sign indicating segment set (in this example, "+"). The segment set name may not be generated each time a segment name obtainment request is received, but may be assigned to each segment set uniquely in advance since a segment set name does not change, in contrast to a segment name, even if a segment is added to the segment set. In this example, a segment set name "Sports+" is generated for the segment set in the "Sports" file, and a segment set name "Quiz+" is generated for the segment set in the "Quiz" file. Note that use of the character "+" at the last of a file name is forbidden to avoid overlaps between segment set names and file names.

The segment set name output unit 2105 outputs segment set names generated by the segment set name generation unit 2104 to the application unit 120.

The segment set identification unit 2119 analyzes a segment set name sent from the input unit 2101 to detect a file name of a file to which the segment set belongs, and sends the detected file name to the segment set position detection unit 2106.

The segment set position detection unit 2106 detects the segment set reading, overwriting, or adding position of the segment set identified by the segment set identification unit 2119. More specifically, the segment set position detection unit 2106 reads, from the file information storage unit 102, the start

address of the file to which the segment set belongs.

In the case of reading segment set data, the segment set position detection unit 2106 reads, from the segment information storage unit 103, the start address offset and segment length of each segment included in the file, and recognizes a set of ranges of all segments in the file as the segment set reading position, each segment ranging from the start storage position (absolute address) to the end storage position (absolute address). For example, upon receipt of a segment set reading request specifying segment set "Quiz+", the segment set position detection unit 2106 detects portions ("0"- "40M" and "60M"- "90M") of the "Quiz" file as the segment set reading position.

In the case of overwriting segment set data, the segment set position detection unit 2106 recognizes a range between the start and the end of a file as the segment set overwriting position. For example, upon receipt of a segment set overwriting request specifying segment set "Sports+", the segment set position detection unit 2106 recognizes a portion ("0"- "150M") of the "Sports" file as the segment set overwriting position.

Accordingly, in the case of overwriting segment set data, it is possible to write segment set data even onto a formerly free space.

In the case of adding segment set data, the segment set position detection unit 2106 reads, from the segment information storage unit 103, the start address offset and the segment length

of the unassigned space in the file, and detects a range between the start and the end of the unassigned space as the segment set adding position. For example, upon receipt of a segment set adding request specifying segment set "Sports+", the segment set
5 position detection unit 2106 recognizes a portion ("110M"- "150M") of the "Sports" file as the segment set adding position.

The segment set access unit 2107 reads, overwrites, or adds segment set data from/to the segment set reading, overwriting, or adding position detected by the segment set
10 position detection unit 2106, as will be described.

In the case of reading segment set data, the segment set access unit 2107 reads segment set data from the detected reading position in the file storage unit 108, and outputs the read data to the application unit 2120.

15 In the case of overwriting segment set data, the segment set access unit 2107 writes segment set data sent from the application unit 2120 onto the detected segment set overwriting position in the file storage unit 108. In the case of adding segment set data, the segment set access unit 2107 writes segment
20 set data sent from the application unit 2120 onto the detected segment set adding position in the file storage unit 108.

The segment set access unit 2107 stops writing the segment set data after receiving the writing end instruction from the application unit 2120 via the input unit 2101, notifies the
25 segment information generation unit 115 and the file information

generation unit 116 that the writing has completed, and sends the start address offset and the segment length of the written segment to the segment information generation unit 115.

<Operation>

5 Now, the operation of the file management apparatus adopting a file transfer system or a recording application as the application 2120 will be described.

FIG. 27 is a flowchart showing an operation procedure of the file management apparatus 2100. It is supposed in FIG. 27
10 that initially, the file storage unit 108 stores the files shown in FIG. 26 and the file information storage unit 102 stores the file information shown in FIG. 4.

When the input unit 2101 receives, from the application unit 2120, instruction "DetectSeg" which is an instruction to
15 detect a segment from a file, the segment information is created (steps S1701, S1702).

When the input unit 2101 receives, from the application unit 2120, instruction "Dir" which is an instruction to obtain a
segment set name, the segment set name is provided (steps S1703,
20 S1704).

When the input unit 2101 receives, from the application unit 2120, instruction "Get_Sports+" which is an instruction to
read segment set data or instruction "Rec_Quiz+" which is an
instruction to write segment set data, the segment set data is
25 read or written (steps S1705, S1706).

<Creation of Segment Information> (Application to Moving-Image Editing System)

The operation of creating the segment information in the present embodiment is the same as Embodiment 1, and therefore will be omitted.

<Providing Segment Set Name> (Application to FTP Application or Moving-Image Editing System)

Now, the operation for providing a segment set name will be described. FIG. 28 is a flowchart showing the procedure of providing a segment set name.

First, the input unit 2101 sends the segment set name obtainment instruction (Dir) to the segment set name generation unit 2104. The segment set name generation unit 2104 refers to the segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103 to generate a segment set name for each existent segment set. More specifically, the segment set name generation unit 2104 generates segment set names which each are composed of (1) a file name of a file to which the segment set belongs, and (2) the identification sign "+". In this example, the segment set name generation unit 2104 generates a segment set name "Sports+" for a set of the three segments in the "Sports" file. Also, the segment set name generation unit 2104 generates a segment name "Quiz+" for a set of the two segments in the "Quiz" file (step S1801).

The segment set name output unit 2105 outputs the generated segment set names to the application unit 2120 (step

S1802).

Now, the operation of reading and writing the segment set data will be described. FIG. 29 is a flowchart showing procedures of reading, overwriting, and adding segment set data.

5 <Reading Segment Set Data> (Application to FTP Application)

The input unit 2101, after receiving a segment set data reading instruction ("Get_Sports+") from the FTP application 610, sends the instruction to the segment set identification unit 2119. The segment set identification unit 2119 identifies the file (Sports) to which the segment set belongs by analyzing the segment set name (steps S2000, S2001).

10 The segment set position detection unit 2106 reads the start storage position of the file ("Sports") to which the segment set belongs, the start storage positions (absolute addresses) of the segments 1-3, and the length of segments 1-3, detects the start storage position (absolute address) and the end storage position (absolute address) of each of the segments 1-3, and recognizes each range between the start storage position and the end storage position as the segment set reading position (step
15 S2002).

20 The segment set access unit 2107 reads the segment set data from the segment set reading position in the file storage unit 108 detected in step S2002, and outputs the read segment set data to the FTP application 610. FIG. 30A shows segments included
25 in the "Quiz" file stored in the file management apparatus 100 of

the FTP server 601 shown in FIG. 8. FIG. 30B shows a segment set which is output to the FTP application 610 and stored in the storage unit 604 of the FTP client 600. More specifically, the drawing shows that the segment set composed of the segment 1 and segment 2 is sent to the FTP application 610 of the FTP server 601, then sent to the FTP client 600 via the communication units 606 and 603 in the same way as ordinary files, and stored in the storage unit 604 (step S2003).

<Overwriting Segment Set Data> (Application to Moving-Image Editing System)

The input unit 2101, after receiving a segment set data overwriting instruction ("Rec_Quiz+") from the moving-image editing application 800, sends the instruction to the segment set identification unit 2119. The segment set identification unit 2119 identifies the file (Quiz) to which the segment set belongs by analyzing the segment set name (Quiz+) (steps S2004, S2005).

The segment set position detection unit 2106 reads the start storage position of the "Quiz" file to which the segment set belongs, and recognizes the range between the start and end of the "Quiz" file as the segment set overwriting position (step S2006).

The segment set access unit 2107 writes the segment set data received from the moving-image editing application 800 onto the detected segment set overwriting position in the file storage unit 108. The segment set access unit 2107 stops writing the

segment set data after receiving the writing end instruction ("Rec_complete") from the moving-image editing application 800 via the input unit 2101, notifies the segment information generation unit 115 and the file information generation unit 116 that the
5 writing has completed, and sends the start address offset and segment length of the written segment to the segment information generation unit 115. FIG. 31 shows the construction of the "Quiz" file after the segment set data has been written therein. As shown in FIG. 31, a piece of segment set data composed of pieces
10 of 20MB, 30MB, and 10MB data has been written in the file from the start, and segment 1 ("0" byte to "20MB"), segment 2 ("20MB" to "50MB"), and segment 3 ("50MB" to "60MB") have been created (step S2007).

The segment information generation unit 115 updates the
15 segment information in the segment information storage unit 103 based on the start address offset and the segment length of the written segment which are sent from the segment set access unit 2107. FIG. 32 shows the segment information of the "Quiz" file after an update. As shown in FIG. 32, the segment information of
20 the "Quiz" file has been updated to show the start address offsets and segment lengths of the newly created segments 1 to 3 and the unassigned space (step S2008).

The file information generation unit 116 updates the
file information stored in the file information storage unit 102.
25 That is to say, the file information generation unit 116 changes

the "Sports" file creation date to the time when the writing of the segment set data completed (step S2009).

<Adding Segment Set Data> (Application to Moving-Image Editing System)

5 The input unit 2101, after receiving a segment set adding instruction ("Recadd_Quiz+") from the moving-image editing application 800, sends the instruction to the segment set identification unit 2119. The segment set identification unit 2119 identifies the file (Quiz) to which the segment set belongs
10 by analyzing the segment set name (Quiz+) (steps S2010, S2011).

 The segment position detection unit 2106 reads the start storage position of the "Quiz" file and the start address offset and the segment length of the unassigned space of the "Quiz" file, detects the start storage position (absolute address) and the end
15 storage position (absolute address) of the unassigned space, and recognizes the range between these positions as the segment set adding position (step S2012).

 The segment set access unit 2107 writes the segment set data received from the moving-image editing application 800 onto
20 the detected segment set adding position in the file storage unit 108. The segment set access unit 2107 stops writing the segment set data after receiving the writing end instruction from the moving-image editing application 800 via the input unit 2101, and notifies the segment information generation unit 115 and the file
25 information generation unit 116 that the writing has completed.

FIG. 33 shows the construction of the "Quiz" file after the segment set data has been written therein. As shown in FIG. 33, a piece of segment set data composed of pieces of 30MB and 20MB segment data has been written starting from the start address offset ("90MB") of the former unassigned space, and a segment 3 ("90MB" to "120MB") and segment 3 ("120MB" to "140MB") have been created (step S2013).

As is the case with the above-described overwriting, the segment information generation unit 115 updates the segment information in the segment information storage unit 103, and the file information generation unit 116 updates the file information stored in the file information storage unit 102. FIG. 34 shows the updated segment information of the "Quiz" file. As shown in FIG. 34, information of the segments 4 and 5 has been added to the segment information (steps S2008, S2009).

<Summary of Embodiment 2>

As described above, the file management apparatus of the present embodiment enables the user to specify a segment set name to access a segment set in a file which includes segment portions constituting the segment set and other portions. With this construction, the user can access a segment set with a simple operation of specifying a segment set name, in much the same way as conventional methods access a file by specifying a file name. This reduces the burden on the user.

Up to this point, the file management apparatus in

Embodiment 2 of the present invention has been described. The present invention, however, is not limited to the above embodiment, and can be varied as follows.

(1) Overwriting Segment Sets

5 In the file management apparatus 2100 of the present embodiment, the segment set position detection unit 2106 recognizes a range between the start and end of a file as the segment set overwriting position, so that the segment set access unit 2107 can write segment data into free spaces, as well as onto
10 the former segments. The overwriting of segment data, however, is not limited to this. For example, the segment set position detection unit 2106 may recognize the former segment portion as the segment set overwriting position, so that the segment set access unit 2107 can write segment set data within this range,
15 that is to say, not to exceed the former segment range.

 Alternatively, the segment 1 and segment 2 in the segment set sent from the application may be written within the range of the former segment 1 and segment 2, respectively.

 In the present embodiment, a range between the start and
20 end of a file is specified as a maximum writing position. The range, however, is not limited to this. For example, data may be written exceeding the former size of the file by increasing the size of the file.

 In the present embodiment, segments are updated in units
25 of segment set data. However, segments may be updated in units of

segment data. That is to say, the application may send one piece of segment data at a time, and each received piece of segment data may be written into the segment set overwriting position.

(2) Adding Segment Sets

5 In the file management apparatus 2100 of the present embodiment, the segment set position detection unit 2106 recognizes a range between the start address and the end address of the unassigned space (a free space at the end of a file, not a free space between segments) as the segment set adding position, so that the segment set access unit 2107 can additionally write
10 segment set data into the segment adding position. The additional writing of segment set data, however, is not limited to this. For example, the segment set position detection unit 2106 may recognize even a free space between segments as the segment set
15 adding position if the size of the free space is larger than a certain size.

 Also, in the present embodiment, addition of segment sets is recognized as addition of segment set data. It, however, may be recognized as addition of segment data. That is to say,
20 the application may send one piece of segment data at a time, and each received piece of segment data may be written into the segment set adding position.

 In the file management apparatus of the present embodiment, segment sets sent from the moving-image editing
25 application 800 are written into an unassigned space. However,

this is not the only way for achievement. For example, when a plurality of segments are included in a file, only segments may be extracted from the file by referring to the segment information and a set of the extracted segments may be added (written) as a segment set. Alternatively, a file including segments may be added (written), together with the unassigned space, to an unassigned space of another file (addition target file).

When a segment, a segment set, or a file larger than an unassigned space of another file is added (written) to the unassigned space, the data may be written so as not to exceed the file size, or may be written to exceed the file size, namely written to the unassigned space and to a space which is outside the file and adjacent to the unassigned space.

(3) Segment Set Name Obtainment Request

In the present embodiment, only a segment set name is displayed in response to a segment set name obtainment request "Dir". However, as is the case with a variation example written in (2) for Embodiment 1, a file name may be displayed together with a segment set name. Also, when the segment information storage unit 103 stores detailed segment information such as a segment length, start time, and end time, the following information based on the detailed information may be displayed also: segment set length (a total of segment lengths), segment set start time (the earliest time among start times of the segments belonging to the segment set), and segment set end time (the

latest time among end times of the segments belonging to the segment set).

<Embodiment 3>

Embodiment 3 relates to a file management apparatus that
5 reads, overwrites, or adds data in units of any of segments, segment sets, and files

<Construction>

FIG. 35 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of the file management apparatus in the present
10 embodiment. In FIG. 35, the components being the same as those in Embodiment 1 or 2 are assigned the same reference numbers. Here, only different components will be described.

The application unit 2520 reads or writes data in units of segments, segment sets, or files using the file management
15 apparatus 2500. The application unit 2520 sends a request to obtain a segment name, a segment set name, or a file name to the file management apparatus 2500, and receives the requested name from the file management apparatus 2500. The application unit 2520 also sends a request to read data specifying an access target
20 name to the file management apparatus 2500, and receives the requested data from the file management apparatus 2500. The application unit 2520 also sends a request to write data specifying an access target name to the file management apparatus 2500, and sends the write-target data to the file management
25 apparatus 2500. Here, the application unit 2520 merely sends a

name to the file management apparatus 2500 regardless of the access target type, and the file management apparatus 2500 analyzes the received name and detects which of a file name, a segment name, or a segment set name it has received. That is to say, the application unit 2520 uses only one method common to three types of the access targets.

The input judgement unit 2501 judges which of a segment, a segment set, and a file the input instruction is to deal with. For example, when receiving the instruction "Dir", the input judgement unit 2501 judges that the input instruction is a file name obtainment request, and sends the request to the file name output unit 2503. When receiving the instruction "Dirseg", the input judgement unit 2501 judges that the input instruction is a segment name obtainment request, and sends the request to the segment name generation unit 104. When receiving the instruction "Dirsegset", the input judgement unit 2501 judges that the input instruction is a segment set name obtainment request, and sends the request to the segment set name generation unit 2104. When receiving the instruction "Dirall", the input judgement unit 2501 judges that the input instruction is a request to obtain all of a file name, a segment name, and a segment set name, sends a file name obtainment request to the file name output unit 2503, a segment name obtainment request to the segment name generation unit 104, and a segment set name obtainment request to the segment set name generation unit 2104.

The input judgement unit 2501 judges that the access target is a segment when the last character of the access target specified in the writing or reading instruction is a numeral, and sends the instruction to the segment identification unit 119. The
5 input judgement unit 2501 judges that the access target is a segment set when the last character of the access target is "+", and sends the instruction to the segment set identification unit 2119. Otherwise, the input judgement unit 2501 judges that the access target is a file, and sends the instruction to the file
10 access unit 2502. For example, "Get_Sports1" is judged as a segment read instruction, and sent to the segment identification unit 119. Similarly, "Get_Sports+" is judged as a segment set read instruction, and sent to the segment set identification unit 2119, and "Get_Sports" is judged as a file read instruction, and sent to
15 the file access unit 2502.

The file name output unit 2503 outputs file names for known file management apparatuses. That is to say, the file name output unit 2503 reads file names from the file information storage unit 102 and outputs the read file names.

20 The file access unit 2502 accesses files for known file management apparatuses. That is to say, the file access unit 2502 refers to the file information stored in the file information storage unit 102 and reads, overwrites, or adds files.

<Operation>

25 Now, the operation of the file management apparatus of

the present embodiment will be described. FIG. 36 is a flowchart showing an operation procedure of the file management apparatus.

A segment name is provided when the input judgement unit 2501 receives a segment name obtainment instruction "Dirseg" from the application unit 2520 (steps S3201, S3202, S3203). A segment set name is provided when the input judgement unit 2501 receives a segment set name obtainment instruction "Dirsegset" (steps S3201, S3204, S3205). A file name is provided when the input judgement unit 2501 receives an instruction "Dir" to obtain a file name, a file name is provided. File, segment, and segment set names are provided when the input judgement unit 2501 receives an instruction "Dirall" to obtain all of a file name, a segment name, and a segment set name (steps S3201, S3208, S3209, S3210, S3211).

Segment data is read or written when the input judgement unit 2501 receives a segment data read instruction (Get_Sports1) or a segment data write instruction (Rec_Quiz1) from the application unit 2520 (steps S3213, S3214).

Segment set data is read or written when the input judgement unit 2501 receives a segment set data read instruction (Get_Sports+), a segment set data overwrite instruction (Rec_Quiz+) (instruction to overwrite segment set data with some data), or a segment set data add instruction (Recadd_Quiz+) (instruction to add some data to segment set data) from the application unit 2520 (steps S3215, S3216).

File data is read or written when the input judgement unit 2501 receives a file data read instruction (Get_Sports) or a file data write instruction (Rec_Quiz) from the application unit 2520 (steps S3217, S3218).

5 Segment information is created when the input judgement unit 2501 receives an instruction (DetectSeg) to detect a segment from a file, from the application unit 2520 (steps S3219, S3220).

Description of other components has already been done
10 and will be omitted here.

<Summary of Embodiment 3>

As described above, in the file system of the present embodiment, it is possible to read, overwrite, or add data in units of any of segments, segment sets, and files by specifying
15 the name. Accordingly, the file management apparatus of the present embodiment allows the user to access a target with only one method common to all types of access targets. This reduces the burden on the user.

<Embodiment 4>

20 Embodiment 4 relates to a file management apparatus that reads data in units of segment partial sets, where each segment partial set is composed of one or more segments included in a file. The present embodiment is suitable for the case where the user wants to copy or transfer such segments in a file as satisfy
25 a desired condition when the file includes segment portions and

other portions, each segment being a logical unit.

<Construction>

FIG. 37 is a functional block diagram showing the construction of the file management apparatus in the present embodiment. The file storage unit 108, file information storage unit 102, file information generation unit 116, segment information storage unit 103, and segment information generation unit 115 of the present embodiment are the same as Embodiment 1. The following is a description of components that are different from Embodiment 1.

The application unit 3107 reads or writes data in units of segment partial sets using the file management apparatus 3100. Here, each segment partial set is a set of segments that satisfy a desired condition, among all the segments of a file.

The input unit 3101 receives a segment partial set data read request specifying a file name and a desired condition.

The segment partial set identification unit 3104 detects, from the segment information storage unit 103, segments that belong to a file having the file name received from the input unit 3101 and satisfy the desired condition, and notifies the segment partial set position detection unit 3105 of the segment numbers of the detected segments which are recognized as a segment partial set.

The segment partial set position detection unit 3105 detects the segment partial set reading position which is

identified by the file name and the segment numbers notified by
the segment partial set identification unit 3104. More
specifically, the segment partial set position detection unit 3105
reads, from the file information storage unit 102, the start
5 address of the file to which the segment partial set belongs.
Then, the segment partial set position detection unit 3105 reads,
from the segment information storage unit 103, the start address
offset and segment length of each segment belonging to the segment
partial set, and recognizes a set of ranges of all segments in the
10 segment partial set as the segment partial set reading position,
each segment ranging from the start storage position (absolute
address) to the end storage position (absolute address).

The segment partial set access unit 3106 reads segment
partial set data from the segment partial set reading position in
15 the file storage unit 108, and outputs the read segment partial
set to the application unit 3107.

<Reading Segment Partial Set> (Application to FTP Application)

Now, reading of a segment partial set will be described,
where it is supposed that the FTP application 610 shown in FIG. 8
20 is used as the application unit 3107. Suppose that the file
storage unit 108 stores the file shown in FIG. 38A, and the
segment information storage unit 103 stores the segment
information shown in FIG. 38B. FIG. 39 is a flowchart showing a
procedure for reading a segment partial set in the present
25 embodiment.

After receiving the segment partial set data read instruction (Get_Sports_-T_1999/10/30_-Sort) shown in FIG. 38C, the input unit 3101 sends the received instruction to the segment partial set identification unit 3104 (step S3500).

5 The segment partial set identification unit 3104 identifies the file (Sports) to which the segment partial set belongs. The segment partial set identification unit 3104 refers to the segment information stored in the segment information storage unit 103 to detect the segments (segments 1, 3, 5) that
10 satisfy the desired condition (that the timecode is 1999/10/30), among the segments belonging to the file (Sports). The segment partial set identification unit 3104 notifies the segment partial set position detection unit 3105 of the file name to which the segment partial set belongs, and also of the segment numbers of
15 the segments belonging to the segment partial set in an ascending order (segment 1, segment 3, segment 5), which is instructed by the specification of the optional code (-Sort) (step S3501).

 The segment partial set position detection unit 3105 reads, from the file information storage unit 102, the start
20 address of the file to which the segment partial set belongs. Then, the segment partial set position detection unit 3105 reads, from the segment information storage unit 103, the start address offset and segment length of each segment (segment 1, segment 3, segment 5) belonging to the segment partial set, and recognizes a
25 set of ranges of all segments in the segment partial set as the

segment partial set reading position, each segment ranging from the start storage position (absolute address) to the end storage position (absolute address) (step S3503).

The segment partial set access unit 3106 reads segment
5 partial set data from the segment partial set reading position detected in the above step in the file storage unit 108, and outputs the read segment partial set to the FTP application 610. FIG. 38D shows the segment partial set output to the FTP application 610 and stored in the storage unit 604 of the FTP
10 client 600 (step S3504).

<Summary of Embodiment 4>

As described above, the file management apparatus of the present embodiment enables the user to copy or transfer only the segments that satisfy a desired condition when files include
15 segment portions and other portions.

The present invention has been fully described by way of examples with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be noted that various changes and modifications will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Therefore, unless such changes and
20 modifications depart from the scope of the present invention, they should be construed as being included therein.

What is claimed is:

1 1. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include a plurality of numbered pieces of data;

7 a position information storage unit operable to store
8 pieces of position information that indicate segment storage
9 positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position
10 information being in a one-to-one correspondence with segment
11 names, and each segment being a set of pieces of data having
12 consecutive numbers;

13 an access request receiving unit operable to receive a
14 segment access request specifying a segment name;

15 a position information read unit operable to read, from
16 the position information storage unit, a piece of position
17 information corresponding to the segment name specified in the
18 segment access request; and

19 a segment access unit operable to access a segment in
20 the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
21 information.

1 2. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names

3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned
7 a timecode;

8 a position information storage unit operable to store
9 pieces of position information that indicate segment storage
10 positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position
11 information being in a one-to-one correspondence with segment
12 names, each segment being a set of pieces of data having
13 consecutive timecodes;

14 an access request receiving unit operable to receive a
15 segment access request specifying a segment name;

16 a position information read unit operable to read, from
17 the position information storage unit, a piece of position
18 information corresponding to the segment name specified in the
19 segment access request; and

20 a segment access unit operable to access a segment in
21 the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
22 information.

1 3. The file management apparatus of Claim 2, wherein

2 each piece of segment position information includes (1)
3 an address indicating a file start storage position of a file to
4 which the segment belongs, and either (2-1) (a) an address offset

5 indicating a size of a portion between the file start and a start
6 of the segment and (b) an address offset indicating a size of a
7 portion between the file start and an end of the segment, or (2-2)
8 (a) an address offset indicating a size of a portion between the
9 file start and a start of the segment and (c) a size of the
10 segment.

1 4. The file management apparatus of Claim 3, wherein
2 the position information storage unit stores the pieces
3 of position information in the same order as the segments for each
4 file, and
5 the file management apparatus further comprising:
6 a receiving unit operable to receive a segment name
7 obtainment request; and
8 a segment name output unit operable to, after the
9 receiving unit receives the segment name obtainment request, refer
10 to the position information storage unit and output to outside the
11 file management apparatus a list of segment names which each
12 include at least (1) a file name of a file to which the segment
13 belongs and (2) a character sequence which indicates a position of
14 the segment in one or more segments belonging to the file.

1 5. The file management apparatus of Claim 4, wherein
2 the position information storage unit stores a table
3 showing relationships between (1) file names of files to which the

4 segments belong, (2) serial numbers of the segments in the files
5 which are assigned in order of storage in the files, and (3)
6 pieces of position information, and

7 the position information read unit, after receiving a
8 segment name, refers to the table to detect a piece of position
9 information that corresponds to a file name and a serial number of
10 the segment which are included in the segment name, and reads the
11 detected piece of position information from the table.

1 6. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned
7 a timecode;

8 a first position information storage unit operable to
9 store pieces of position information that indicate file storage
10 positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position
11 information being in a one-to-one correspondence with file
12 names;

13 a second position information storage unit operable to
14 store pieces of position information that indicate segment storage
15 positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position
16 information being in a one-to-one correspondence with segment

17 names, and each segment being a set of pieces of data having
18 consecutive timecodes;

19 an access request receiving unit operable to receive an
20 access request specifying an access target name which is either a
21 segment name or a file name;

22 a judgement unit operable to judge whether the access
23 target name is a segment name or a file name;

24 a position information read unit operable to read, from
25 either the first position information storage unit or the second
26 position information storage unit, a piece of position information
27 corresponding to the access target name judged by the judgement
28 unit; and

29 an access unit operable to access either a segment or
30 a file stored in the file storage unit by referring to the read
31 piece of position information.

1 7. The file management apparatus of Claim 6, wherein

2 the judgement unit judges that the access target name
3 is a segment name when the access target name includes a name of
4 a file stored in the file storage unit and a character sequence
5 indicating a serial number of a segment in the file.

1 8. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the

4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file obtaining unit operable to obtain files which
6 each include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each
7 been assigned a timecode, and store the obtained files in a file
8 storage unit;

9 the file storage unit operable to store the obtained
10 files;

11 a position information obtaining unit operable to
12 recognize each set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes
13 as a segment, obtain pieces of position information that indicate
14 segment storage positions in the file storage unit, and store the
15 obtained pieces of position information in a position information
16 storage unit;

17 the position information storage unit operable to store
18 the obtained pieces of position information;

19 a segment access request receiving unit operable to
20 receive a segment access request specifying a segment;

21 a position information read unit operable to read, from
22 the position information storage unit, a piece of position
23 information corresponding to the segment specified in the segment
24 access request; and

25 a segment access unit operable to access the segment in
26 the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
27 information.

1 9. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file obtaining unit operable to obtain files which
6 each include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each
7 been assigned a timecode, and store the obtained files in a file
8 storage unit;

9 the file storage unit operable to store the obtained
10 files;

11 a segment identifying unit operable to recognize each
12 set of pieces of video data having consecutive timecodes as a
13 segment;

14 a position information creating unit operable to create
15 pieces of position information that indicate storage positions of
16 the identified segments in the file storage unit, and store the
17 created pieces of position information in a position information
18 storage unit;

19 the position information storage unit operable to store
20 the created pieces of position information;

21 a segment access request receiving unit operable to
22 receive a segment access request specifying a segment;

23 a position information read unit operable to read, from
24 the position information storage unit, a piece of position
25 information corresponding to the segment specified in the segment

26 access request; and

27 a segment access unit operable to access the segment in
28 the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
29 information.

1 10. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include one or more segments that are each a logical unit;

7 a position information storage unit operable to store
8 pieces of position information that indicate segment storage
9 positions in the file storage unit;

10 an access request receiving unit operable to receive a
11 segment set access request specifying a segment set name, each
12 segment set being composed of all segments in a file, and each
13 segment set name including a name of the file and a character
14 sequence unique to segment set names;

15 a position information read unit operable to identify
16 a file to which a segment set corresponding to the specified
17 segment set name belongs, and read, from the position information
18 storage unit, pieces of position information corresponding to all
19 segments belonging to the identified file, recognizing the read
20 pieces of position information as a piece of position information

21 of the segment set; and
22 a segment set access unit operable to access the segment
23 set in the file storage unit by referring to the piece of position
24 information of the segment set.

1 11. The file management apparatus of Claim 10, wherein
2 each piece of segment position information includes (1)
3 an address indicating a file start storage position of a file to
4 which the segment belongs, and either (2-1) (a) an address offset
5 indicating a size of a portion between the file start and a start
6 of the segment and (b) an address offset indicating a size of a
7 portion between the file start and an end of the segment, or (2-2)
8 (a) an address offset indicating a size of a portion between the
9 file start and a start of the segment and (c) a size of the
10 segment.

1 12. The file management apparatus of Claim 11 further
2 comprising:

3 a receiving unit operable to receive a segment set name
4 obtainment request; and

5 a segment set name output unit operable to, after the
6 receiving unit receives the segment set name obtainment request,
7 refer to the position information storage unit and output to
8 outside the file management apparatus a list of segment set names
9 which each include (1) a file name of a file to which the segment

10 set belongs and (2) a character sequence unique to segment set
11 names.

1 13. The file management apparatus of Claim 10, wherein

2 each file includes a plurality of pieces of video data
3 that have each been assigned a timecode, and

4 the file management apparatus further comprises:

5 a segment identifying unit operable to recognize each
6 set of pieces of video data having consecutive timecodes as a
7 segment; and

8 a position information creating unit operable to create
9 pieces of position information that indicate storage positions of
10 the identified segments in the file storage unit, and store the
11 created pieces of position information in the position information
12 storage unit.

1 14. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include one or more segments that are each a logical unit;

7 a first position information storage unit operable to
8 store pieces of position information that indicate file storage
9 positions in the file storage unit, the pieces of position

10 information being in a one-to-one correspondence with file
11 names;

12 a second position information storage unit operable to
13 store pieces of position information that indicate segment storage
14 positions in the file storage unit;

15 an access request receiving unit operable to receive an
16 access request specifying an access target name;

17 a judgement unit operable to judge whether the access
18 target name is a segment set name or a file name, each segment set
19 being a set of all segments included in one file;

20 a position information read unit operable to read, from
21 either the first position information storage unit or the second
22 position information storage unit, a piece of position information
23 corresponding to the access target name judged by the judgement
24 unit; and

25 an access unit operable to access either a segment set
26 or a file stored in the file storage unit by referring to the read
27 piece of position information.

1 15. The file management apparatus of Claim 14, wherein

2 the judgement unit judges that the access target name
3 is a segment set name when the access target name includes a name
4 of a file stored in the file storage unit and a character sequence
5 unique to segment set names.

1 16. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned
7 a timecode;

8 a position information storage unit operable to store
9 pieces of position information that indicate positions of free
10 spaces in the files, each free space not storing a segment, and
11 each segment being a set of pieces of data having consecutive
12 timecodes;

13 an add request receiving unit operable to receive a
14 segment add request which requests to add a new segment to a
15 file;

16 a segment obtaining unit operable to obtain a new
17 segment;

18 a position information read unit operable to read, from
19 the position information storage unit, a piece of free space
20 position information; and

21 a segment add unit operable to add the new segment to
22 the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of free space
23 position information.

1 17. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file

2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned
7 a timecode;

8 a position information storage unit operable to store
9 pieces of free space position information that indicate positions
10 of free spaces in the files, each free space not storing a
11 segment, and also store pieces of segment position information
12 that indicate positions of segments in the files, each segment
13 being a set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes;

14 an add request receiving unit operable to receive a
15 segment set add request specifying (1) an add destination file and
16 (2) a source file including a segment set which is to be added to
17 the add destination file;

18 a position information read unit operable to read, from
19 the position information storage unit, a piece of free space
20 position information indicating a position of a free space of the
21 specified add destination file;

22 a segment set extract unit operable to extract all
23 segments included in the source file as a segment set by referring
24 to the pieces of segment position information stored in the
25 position information storage unit; and

26 a segment set add unit operable to add the extracted

27 segment set to the free space by referring to the read piece of
28 free-space position information.

1 18. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include a plurality of pieces of data that have each been assigned
7 a timecode;

8 a position information storage unit operable to store
9 pieces of free space position information that indicate positions
10 of free spaces in the files, each segment being a set of pieces of
11 data having consecutive timecodes;

12 an add request receiving unit operable to receive a file
13 add request specifying (1) an add destination file and (2) a
14 source file which is to be added to the add destination file;

15 a position information read unit operable to read, from
16 the position information storage unit, a piece of free space
17 position information indicating a position of a free space of the
18 specified add destination file;

19 a file add unit operable to add the source file to the
20 free space by referring to the read piece of free space position
21 information.

1 19. A file management apparatus which stores and manages file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accesses files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management apparatus comprising:

5 a file storage unit operable to store files which each
6 include one or more segments that are each a logical unit;

7 a position information storage unit operable to store
8 pieces of position information that indicate segment storage
9 positions in the file storage unit;

10 an access request receiving unit operable to receive a
11 segment partial set access request specifying a file name and a
12 condition, each segment partial set being a set of one or more
13 segments in one file;

14 a position information read unit operable to read, from
15 the position information storage unit, pieces of position
16 information corresponding to all segments belonging to the
17 specified file and satisfying the specified condition, recognizing
18 the read pieces of position information as a piece of position
19 information of the requested segment partial set; and

20 a segment partial set access unit operable to access the
21 segment partial set by referring to the piece of position
22 information of the segment partial set.

1 20. The file management apparatus of Claim 19, wherein

2 each file includes video data including portions that

3 have each been assigned a timecode, and

4 the file management apparatus further comprises:

5 a segment identifying unit operable to recognize each
6 set of video data portions having consecutive timecodes as a
7 segment; and

8 a position information creating unit operable to create
9 pieces of position information that indicate storage positions of
10 the identified segments in the file storage unit, and store the
11 created pieces of position information in the position information
12 storage unit.

1 21. A file management method for storing and managing file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accessing files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management method comprising:

5 an access request receiving step for receiving a segment
6 access request specifying a segment name, each segment being a set
7 of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes among a plurality
8 of pieces of data stored in a file storage unit;

9 a position information read step for reading, from a
10 position information storage unit which stores pieces of position
11 information that are in a one-to-one correspondence with segment
12 names and indicate segment storage positions in a file storage
13 unit, a piece of position information corresponding to the segment
14 name specified in the segment access request; and

15 a segment access step for accessing a segment in the
16 file-storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
17 information.

1 22. A file management method for storing and managing file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accessing files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management method comprising:

5 a file obtaining step for obtaining files which each
6 include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each been
7 assigned a timecode, and store the obtained files in a file
8 storage unit;

9 a position information obtaining step for recognizing
10 each set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes as a
11 segment, obtaining pieces of position information that indicate
12 segment storage positions in the file storage unit, and storing
13 the obtained pieces of position information in a position
14 information storage unit;

15 a segment access request receiving step for receiving
16 a segment access request specifying a segment;

17 a position information read step for reading, from the
18 position information storage unit, a piece of position information
19 corresponding to the segment specified in the segment access
20 request; and

21 a segment access step for accessing the segment in the

22 file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
23 information.

1 23. A file management method for storing and managing file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accessing files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management method comprising:

5 a file obtaining step for obtaining files which each
6 include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each been
7 assigned a timecode, and storing the obtained files in a file
8 storage unit;

9 a segment identifying step for recognizing each set of
10 pieces of video data having consecutive timecodes as a segment;

11 a position information creating step for creating pieces
12 of position information that indicate storage positions of the
13 identified segments in the file storage unit, and storing the
14 created pieces of position information in a position information
15 storage unit;

16 a segment access request receiving step for receiving
17 a segment access request specifying a segment;

18 a position information read step for reading, from the
19 position information storage unit, a piece of position information
20 corresponding to the segment specified in the segment access
21 request; and

22 a segment access step for accessing the segment in the

23 file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
24 information.

1 24. A file management method for storing and managing file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accessing files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management method comprising:

5 an access request receiving step for receiving a segment
6 set access request specifying a segment set name, each segment set
7 being composed of all segments in a file, each segment set name
8 including a name of the file and a character sequence unique to
9 segment set names, and each segment being a logical unit;

10 a position information read step for identifying a file
11 to which a segment set corresponding to the specified segment set
12 name belongs, and reading, from a position information storage
13 unit which stores pieces of position information that indicate
14 segment storage positions in a file storage unit, pieces of
15 position information corresponding to all segments belonging to
16 the identified file, recognizing the read pieces of position
17 information as a piece of position information of the segment set;
18 and

19 a segment set access step for accessing the segment set
20 in the file storage unit by referring to the piece of position
21 information of the segment set.

1 25. A file management method for storing and managing file
2 storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names
3 and accessing files that correspond to specified file names, the
4 file management method comprising:

5 an access request receiving step for receiving a segment
6 partial set access request specifying a file name and a condition,
7 the segment partial set access request requesting to access a
8 segment partial set which is a set of one or more segments
9 satisfying the specified condition, and each segment being a
10 logical unit and being included in a file stored in a file storage
11 unit;

12 a position information read step for reading, from a
13 position information storage unit which stores pieces of position
14 information that indicate segment storage positions in the file
15 storage unit, pieces of position information corresponding to all
16 segments belonging to the specified file and satisfying the
17 specified condition, recognizing the read pieces of position
18 information as a piece of position information of the segment
19 partial set; and

20 a segment partial set access step for accessing the
21 segment partial set by referring to the piece of position
22 information of the segment partial set.

1 26. A computer-readable record medium recording a file management
2 program for storing and managing file storage positions in a one-

3 to-one correspondence with file names and accessing files that
4 correspond to specified file names, the file management program
5 comprising:

6 an access request receiving step for receiving a segment
7 access request specifying a segment name, each segment being a set
8 of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes among a plurality
9 of pieces of data stored in a file storage unit;

10 a position information read step for reading, from the
11 position information storage unit, a piece of position information
12 corresponding to the segment name specified in the segment access
13 request; and

14 a segment access step for accessing a segment in the
15 file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
16 information.

1 27. A computer-readable record medium recording a file management
2 program for storing and managing file storage positions in a one-
3 to-one correspondence with file names and accessing files that
4 correspond to specified file names, the file management program
5 comprising:

6 a file obtaining step for obtaining files which each
7 include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each been
8 assigned a timecode, and store the obtained files in a file
9 storage unit;

10 a position information obtaining step for recognizing

each set of pieces of data having consecutive timecodes as a segment, obtaining pieces of position information that indicate segment storage positions in the file storage unit, and storing the obtained pieces of position information in a position information storage unit;

a segment access request receiving step for receiving a segment access request specifying a segment;

a position information read step for reading, from the position information storage unit, a piece of position information corresponding to the segment specified in the segment access request; and

a segment access step for accessing the segment in the file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position information.

28. A computer-readable record medium recording a file management program for storing and managing file storage positions in a one-to-one correspondence with file names and accessing files that correspond to specified file names, the file management program comprising:

a file obtaining step for obtaining files which each include a plurality of pieces of video data that have each been assigned a timecode, and storing the obtained files in a file storage unit;

a segment identifying step for recognizing each set of

11 pieces of video data having consecutive timecodes as a segment;
12 a position information creating step for creating pieces
13 of position information that indicate storage positions of the
14 identified segments in the file storage unit, and storing the
15 created pieces of position information in a position information
16 storage unit;
17 a segment access request receiving step for receiving
18 a segment access request specifying a segment;
19 a position information read step for reading, from the
20 position information storage unit, a piece of position information
21 corresponding to the segment specified in the segment access
22 request; and
23 a segment access step for accessing the segment in the
24 file storage unit by referring to the read piece of position
25 information.

1 29. A computer-readable record medium recording a file management
2 program for storing and managing file storage positions in a one-
3 to-one correspondence with file names and accessing files that
4 correspond to specified file names, the file management program
5 comprising:

6 an access request receiving step for receiving a segment
7 set access request specifying a segment set name, each segment set
8 being composed of all segments in a file, each segment set name
9 including a name of the file and a character sequence unique to

10 segment set names, and each segment being a logical unit.
11 a position information read step for identifying a file
12 to which a segment set corresponding to the specified segment set
13 name belongs, and reading, from a position information storage
14 unit which stores pieces of position information that indicate
15 segment storage positions in a file storage unit, pieces of
16 position information corresponding to all segments belonging to
17 the identified file, recognizing the read pieces of position
18 information as a piece of position information of the segment set;
19 and
20 a segment set access step for accessing the segment set
21 in the file storage unit by referring to the piece of position
22 information of the segment set.

1 30. A computer-readable record medium recording a file management
2 program for storing and managing file storage positions in a one-
3 to-one correspondence with file names and accessing files that
4 correspond to specified file names, the file management program
5 comprising:

6 an access request receiving step for receiving a segment
7 partial set access request specifying a file name and a condition,
8 the segment partial set access request requesting to access a
9 segment partial set which is a set of one or more segments
10 satisfying the specified condition, and each segment being a
11 logical unit and being included in a file stored in a file storage

12 unit~~s~~

13 a position information read step for reading, from a
14 position information storage unit which stores pieces of position
15 information that indicate segment storage positions in the file
16 storage unit, pieces of position information corresponding to all
17 segments belonging to the specified file and satisfying the
18 specified condition, recognizing the read pieces of position
19 information as a piece of position information of the segment
20 partial set; and

21 a segment partial set access step for accessing the
22 segment partial set by referring to the piece of position
23 information of the segment partial set.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Upon receipt of a segment name obtainment request, the segment name generation unit 104 generates a segment name composed of (1) a file name of a file to which the segment belongs and (2) a number indicating a serial number of the segment in the file.

- 5 Upon receipt of an access request specifying a segment name, the segment identification unit 119 refers to the segment name to detect the file name and the serial number of the segment in the detected file. The segment position detection unit 106 then refers to the file information storage unit 102 and the segment
10 information storage unit 103 to detect a position where a segment is to be accessed.

PRICE AND GESS

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

JOSEPH W. PRICE
ALBIN H. GESS
MICHAEL J. MOFFATT
GORDON E. GRAY III
BRADLEY D. BLANCHE

2100 S.E. MAIN STREET, SUITE 250

IRVINE, CALIFORNIA 92614-6238

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
TELEPHONE: (949) 261-8433
FACSIMILE: (949) 261-9072
FACSIMILE: (949) 261-1726

OF COUNSEL
JAMES F. KIRK

e-mail: pgu@pgulaw.com

DRAWINGS - THIRTY-FIVE (35) SHEETS

Applicant(s): Tomoko Yamaguchi et al. et al.

Title: FINAL MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHOD

Attorney's
Docket No.: NAK1-BN18

"EXPRESS MAIL" MAILING
LABEL NO. EM074234802US

DATE OF DEPOSIT: November 28, 2000

FIG. 1

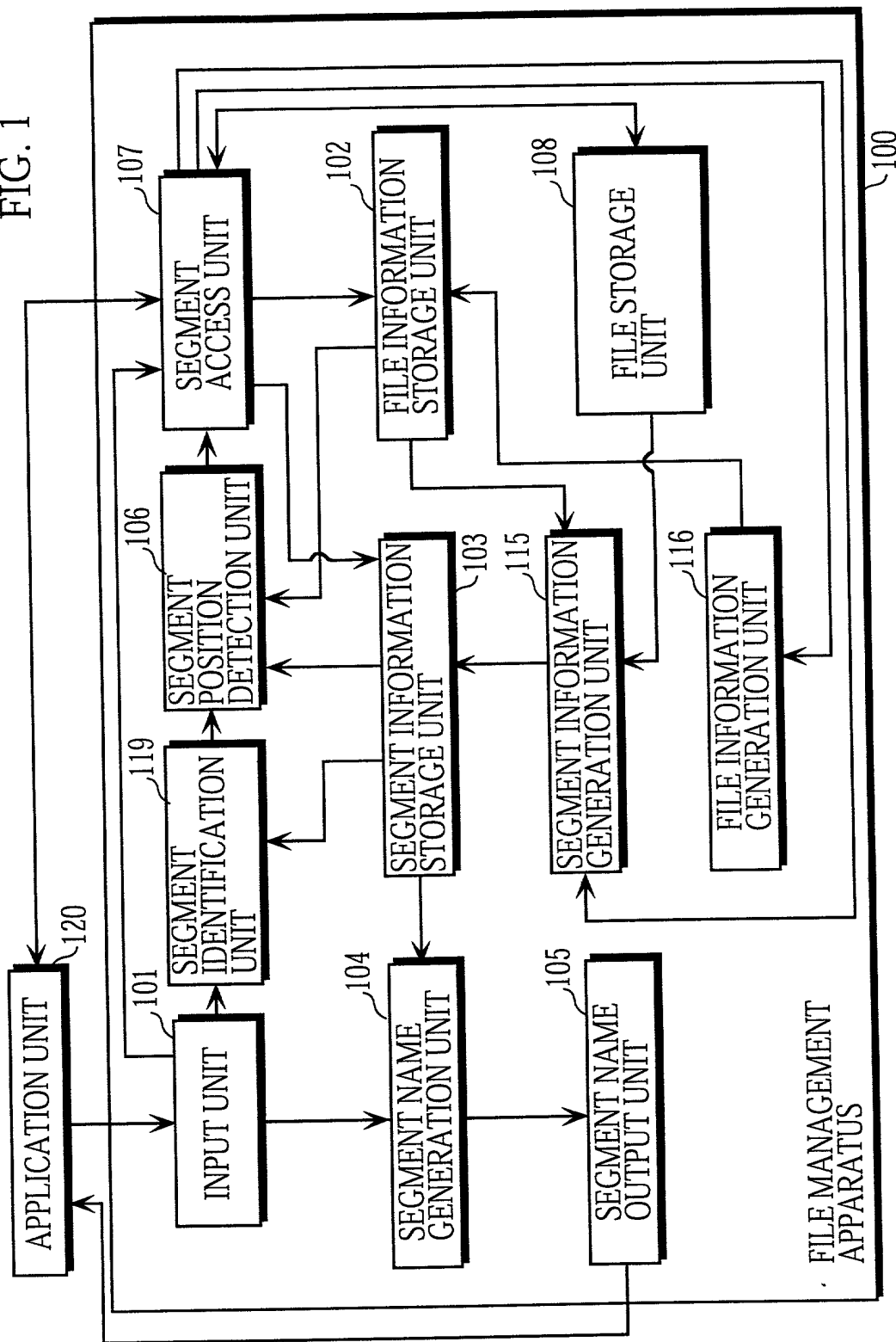


FIG. 2

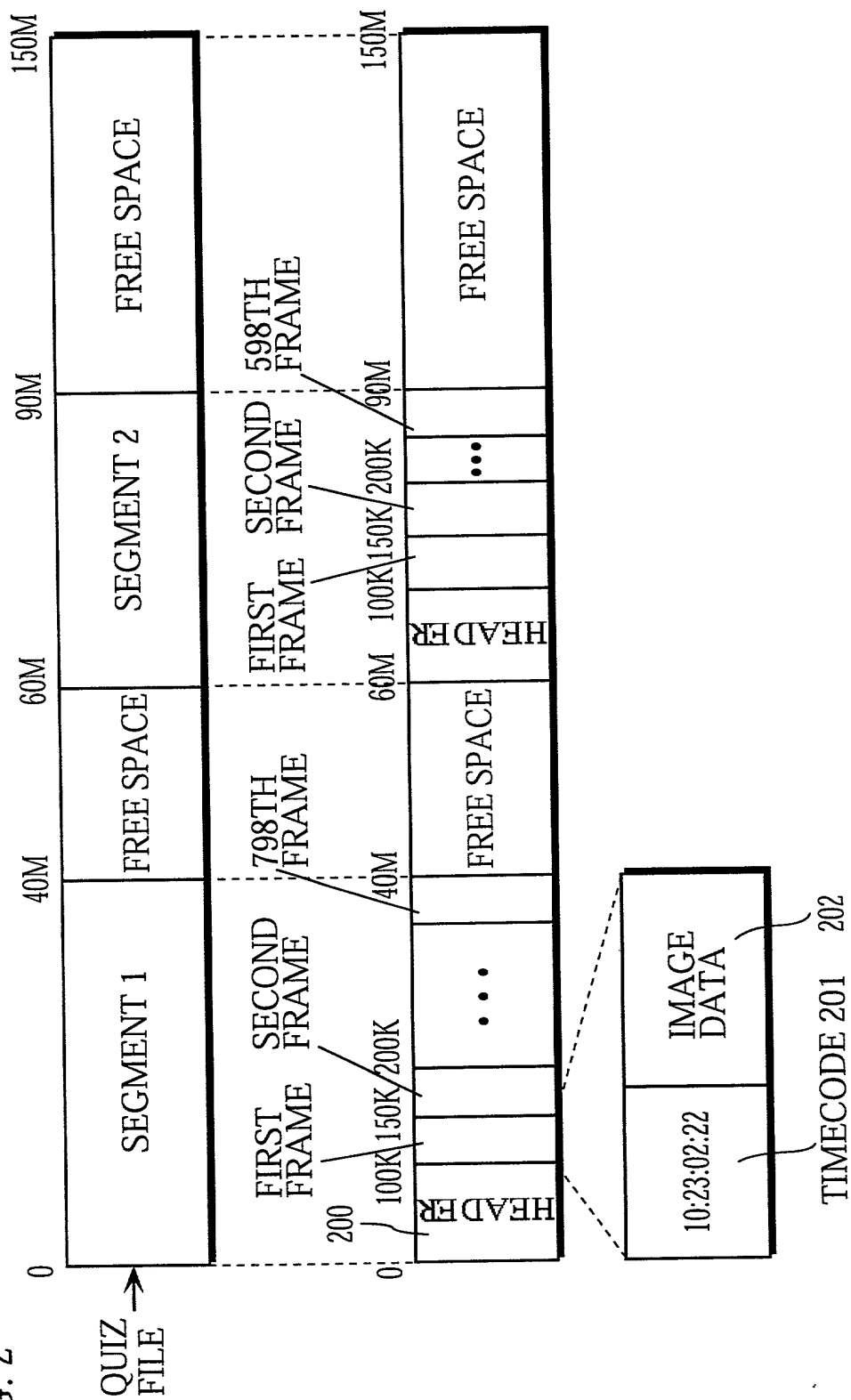


FIG. 3A

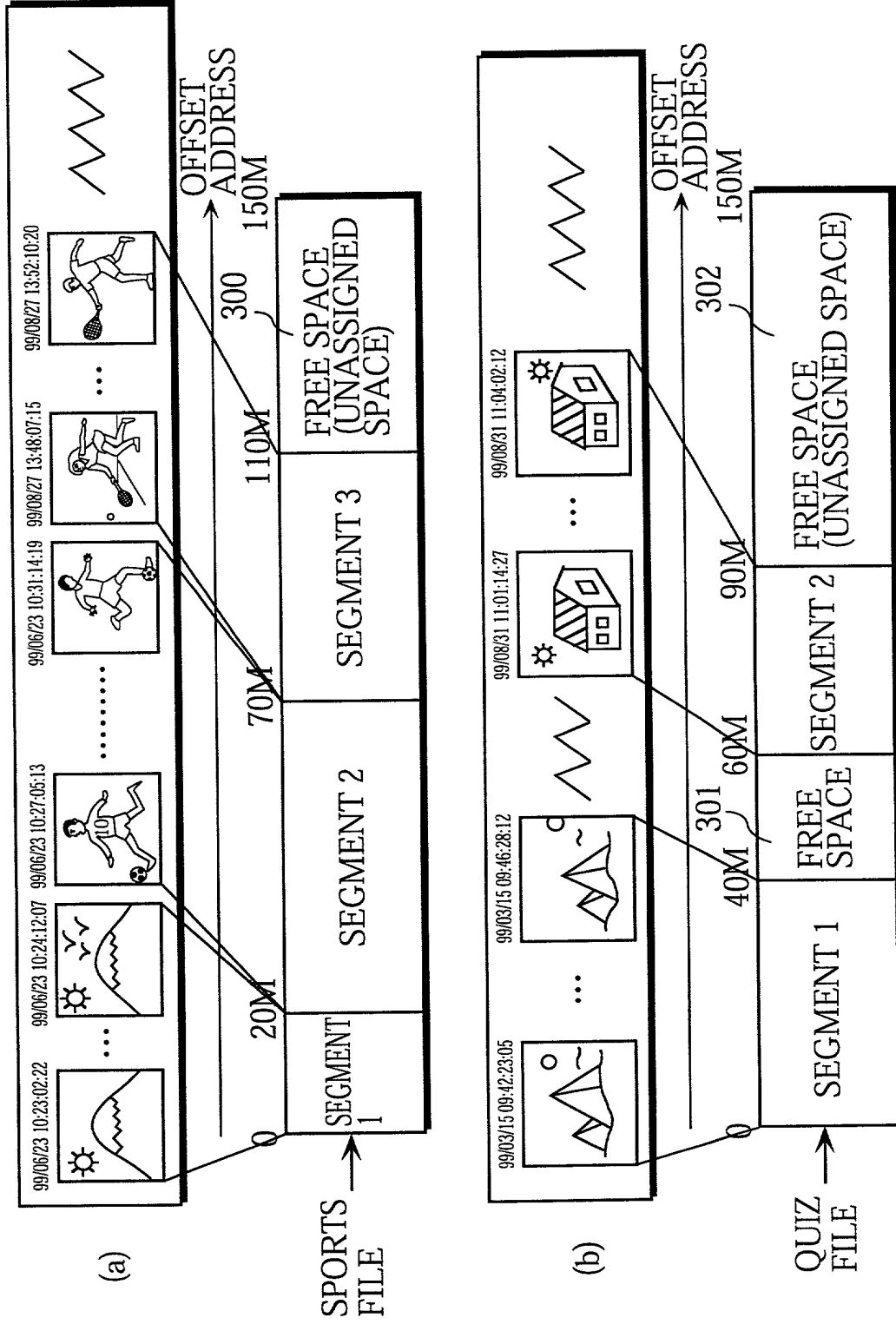


FIG. 4

FILE NAME	STORAGE POSITION	CREATION DATE
Sports	004	99/08/27 13:52:10
Quiz	126	99/08/31 11:04:02

FIG. 5

SPORTS FILE		
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
SEGMENT 1	0	20M
SEGMENT 2	20M	50M
SEGMENT 3	70M	40M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	110M	40M
QUIZ FILE		
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
SEGMENT 1	0	40M
SEGMENT 2	60M	30M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	40M	20M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	90M	60M

FIG. 6

SEGMENT NAME
= FILE NAME OF A FILE TO WHICH A SEGMENT BELONGS
+ SERIAL NUMBER OF SEGMENT IN THE FILE ASSIGNED
IN ORDER OF STORAGE IN THE FILE

FIG. 7

FILE	SEGMENT	SEGMENT NAME
Sports	SEGMENT 1	Sports 1
	SEGMENT 2	Sports 2
	SEGMENT 3	Sports 3
Quiz	SEGMENT 1	Quiz 1
	SEGMENT 2	Quiz 2

FIG. 8

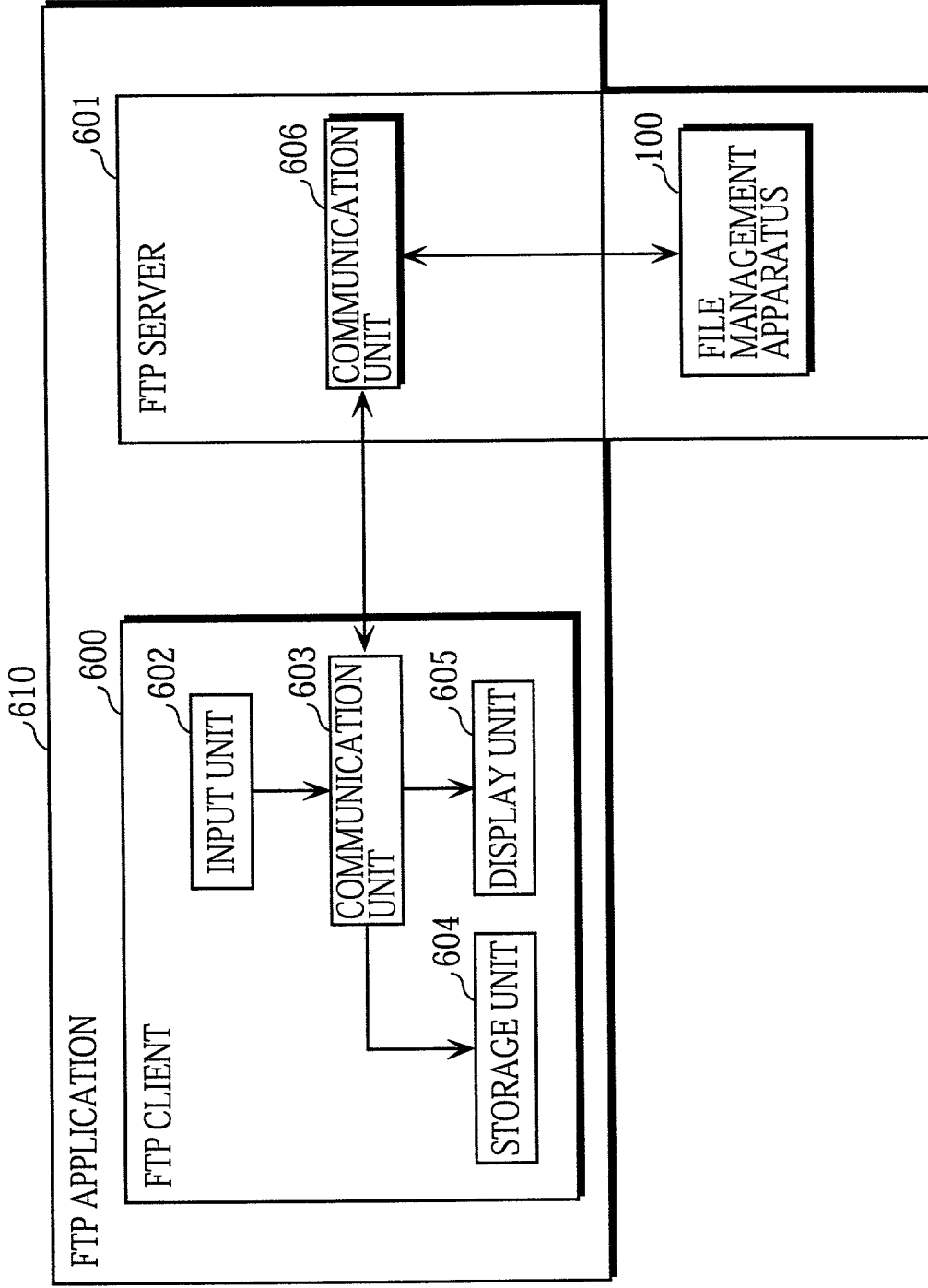


FIG. 9

%ftp PC12		
ftp>dir		
[.]	[..]	Sports 1
Sports 2	Sports 3	Quiz 1
Quiz 2		

FIG. 10

ftp>get Sports 2
File Transfer Succeed

FIG. 11

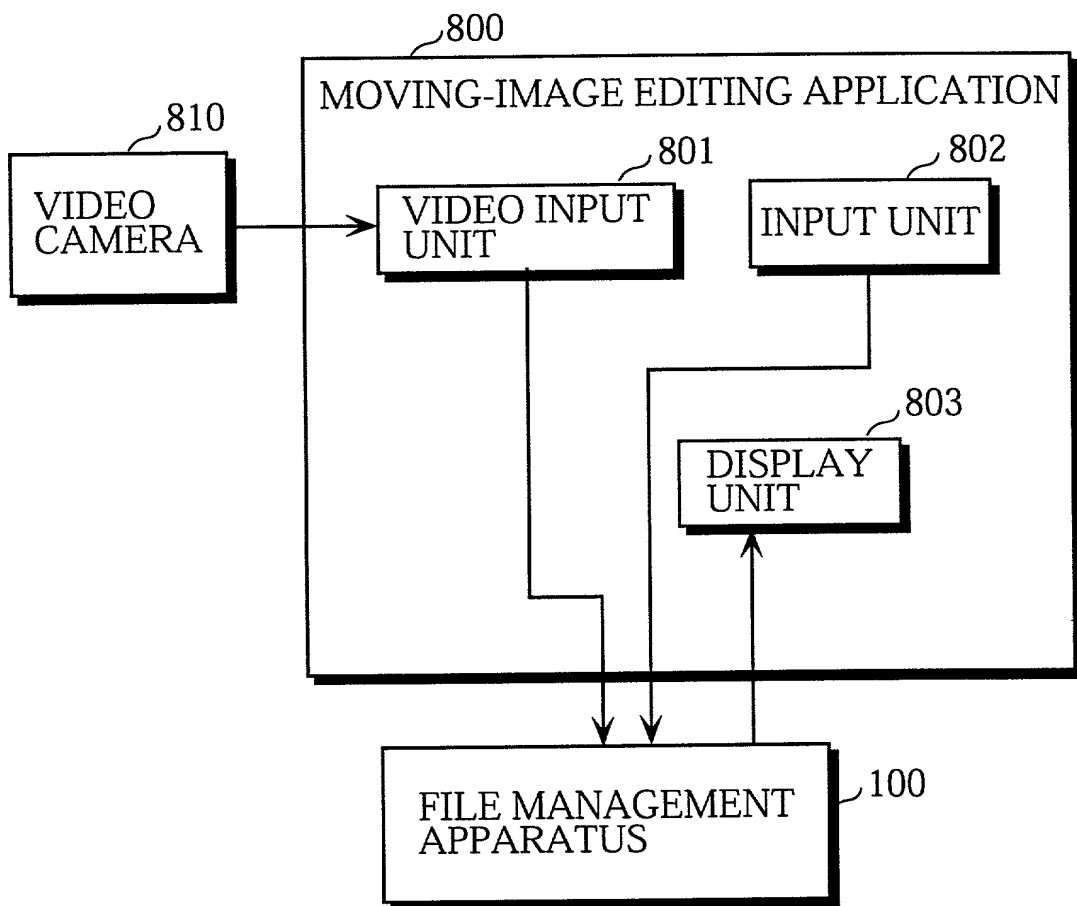


FIG. 12

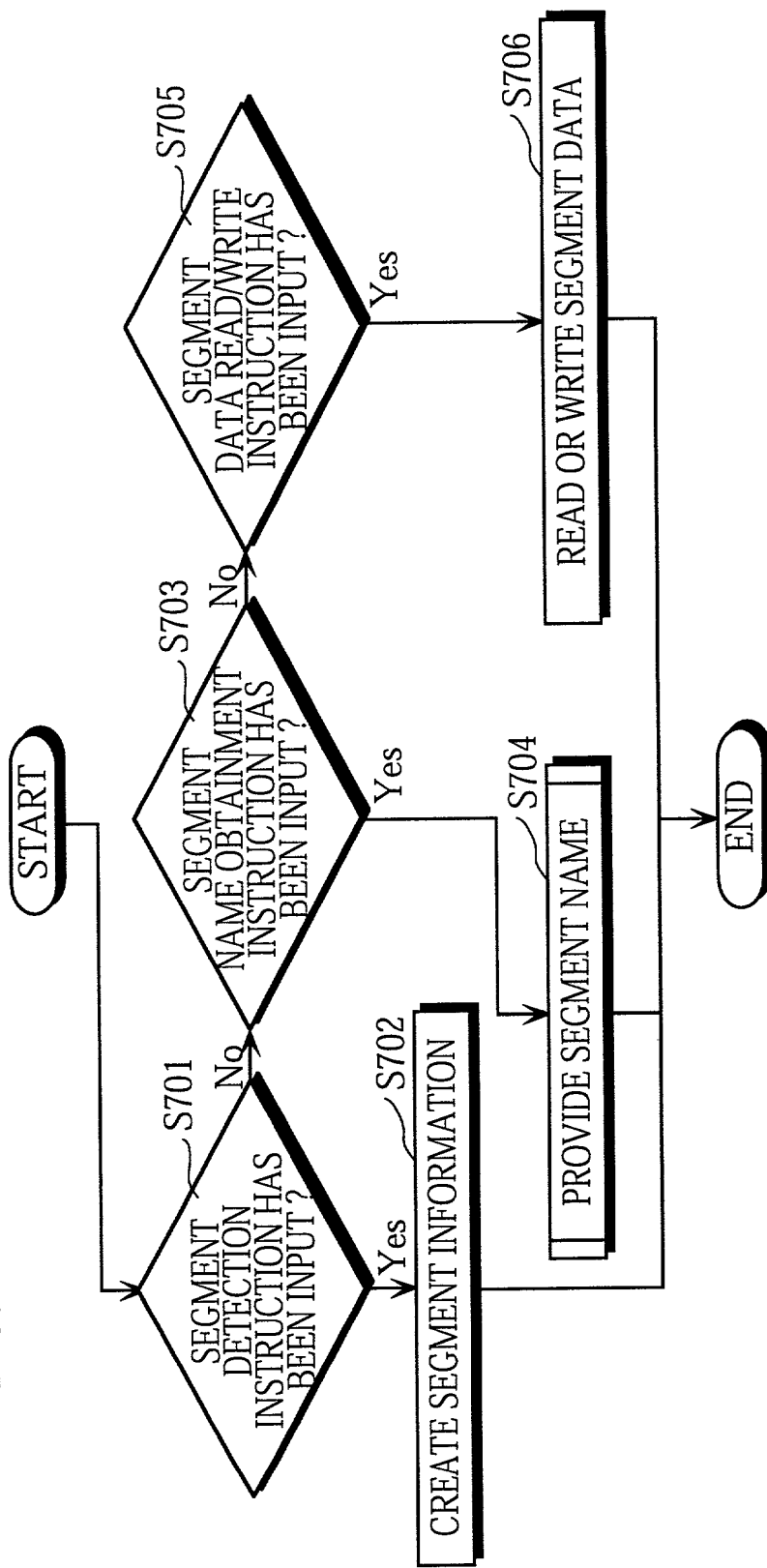


FIG. 13

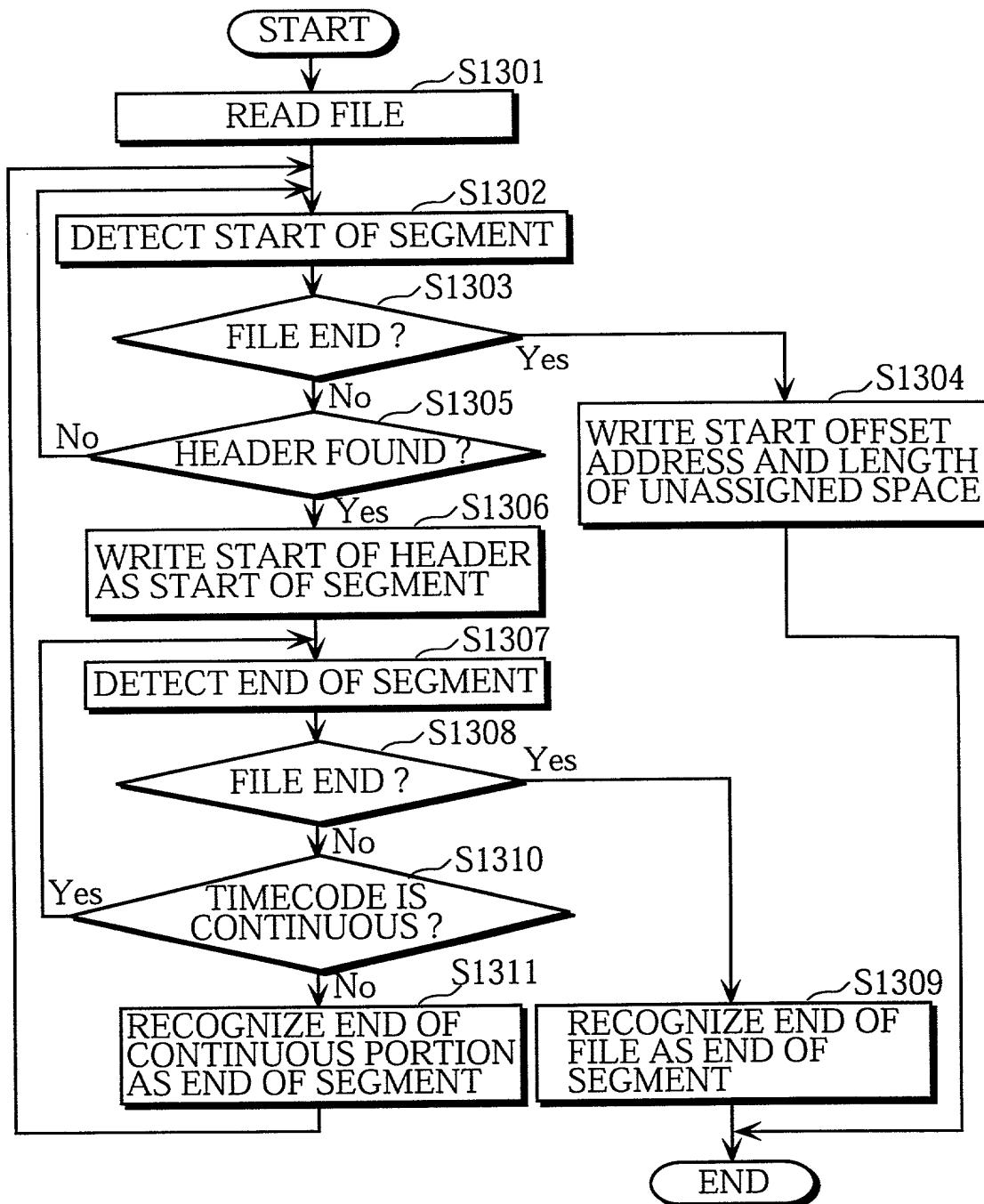


FIG. 14

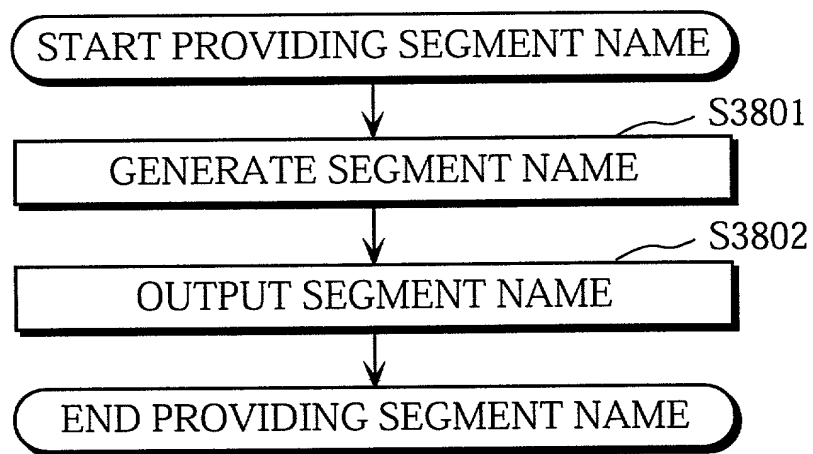


FIG. 15

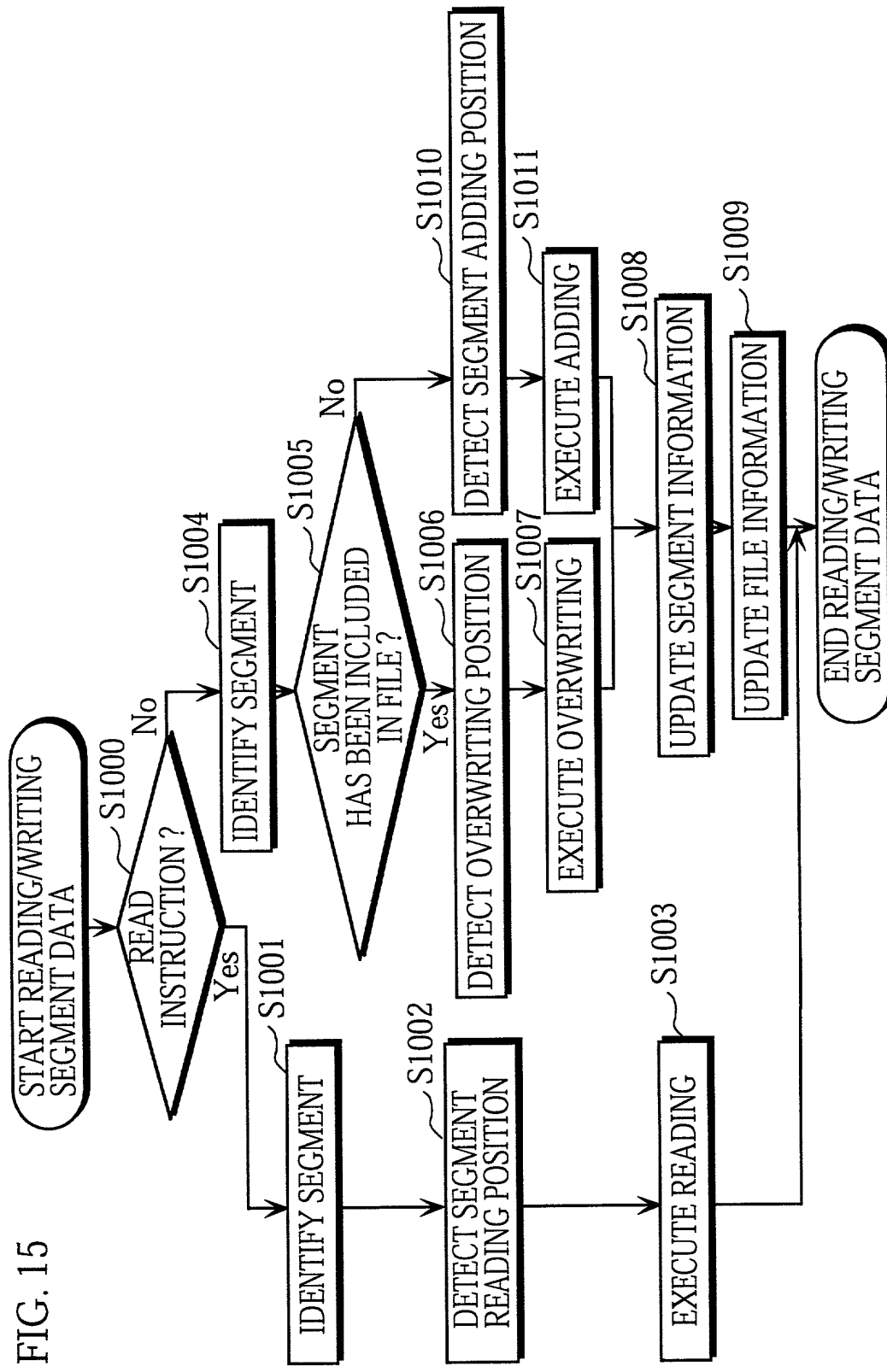


FIG. 16

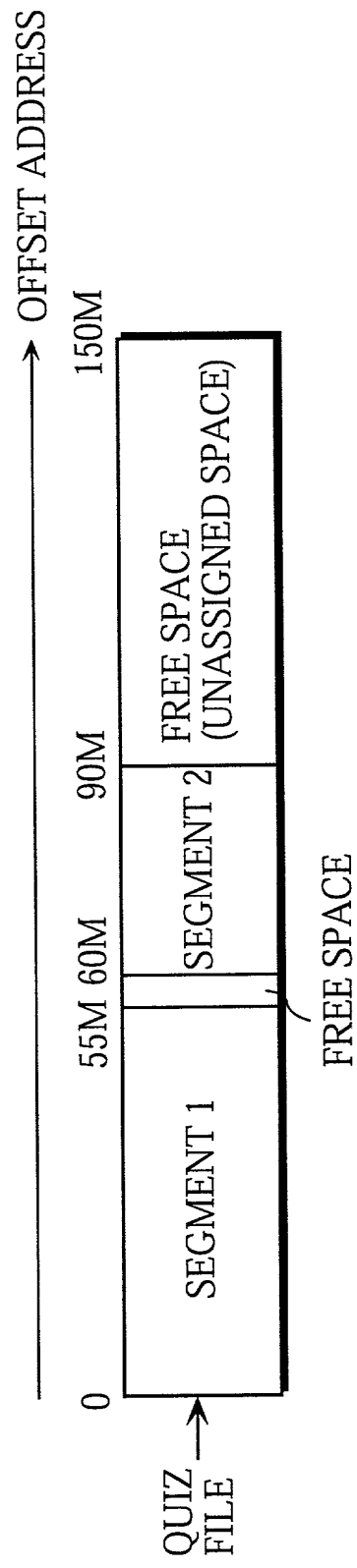


FIG. 17

QUIZ FILE		
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
SEGMENT 1	0	55M
SEGMENT 2	60M	30M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	90M	60M

FIG. 18

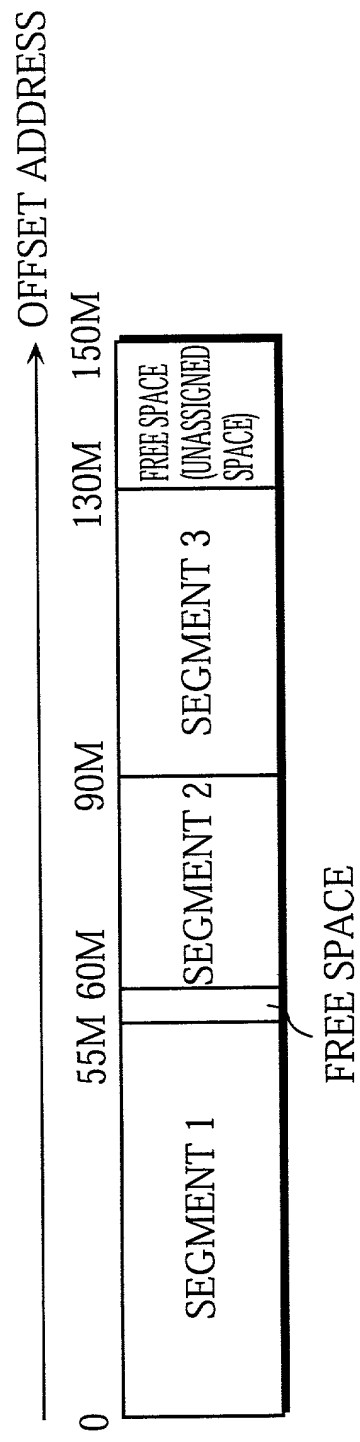


FIG. 19

SPORTS FILE		
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
SEGMENT 1	0	55M
SEGMENT 2	60M	30M
SEGMENT 3	90M	40M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	130M	20M

FIG. 20

SPORTS FILE				
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)	START TIME	END TIME
SEGMENT 1	0	20M	99/06/23 10:23:02:22	99/06/23 10:24:12:07
SEGMENT 2	20M	50M	99/06/23 10:27:05:13	99/06/23 10:31:14:19
SEGMENT 3	70M	40M	99/08/27 13:48:07:15	99/08/27 13:52:10:20
UNASSIGNED SPACE	110M	40M		
QUIZ FILE				
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)	START TIME	END TIME
SEGMENT 1	0	40M	99/03/15 09:42:23:05	99/03/15 09:46:28:12
SEGMENT 2	60M	30M	99/08/31 11:01:14:27	99/08/31 11:04:02:12
UNASSIGNED SPACE	40M	20M		
UNASSIGNED SPACE	90M	60M		

%ftp> 0 s-2 0

	LENGTH	START TIME	END TIME
Sports	150MB	99/06/23 10:23:02:22	99/08/27 13:52:10:20
Sports 1	20MB	99/06/23 10:23:02:22	99/06/23 10:24:12:07
Sports 2	50MB	99/06/23 10:27:05:13	99/06/23 10:31:14:19
Sports 3	40MB	99/08/27 13:48:07:15	99/08/27 13:52:10:20
Quiz	150MB	99/03/15 09:42:23:05	99/08/31 11:04:02:12
Quiz 1	40MB	99/03/15 09:42:23:05	99/03/15 09:46:28:12
Quiz 2	30MB	99/08/31 11:01:14:27	99/08/31 11:04:02:12

FIG. 21

FIG. 22

SEGMENT NAME
 = FILE NAME OF A FILE TO WHICH A SEGMENT BELONGS
 + ALPHABET INDICATING A SERIAL STORAGE-ORDER
 NUMBER OF SEGMENT IN FILE

FIG. 23

SPORTS FILE		
SEGMENT NAME	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
baseball	0	20M
tennis	20M	50M
ski	70M	40M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	110M	40M
QUIZ FILE		
SEGMENT NAME	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
Introquiz	0	60M
Jesturequiz	60M	30M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	90M	60M

FIG. 24A

SPORTS FILE		
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
SEGMENT 1	0	20M
SEGMENT 2	20M	50M
SEGMENT 3	70M	40M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	110M	40M
QUIZ FILE		
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
SEGMENT 1	0	60M
SEGMENT 2	60M	30M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	90M	60M

FIG. 24B

SEGMENT NAME	FILE NAME	STORAGE ORDER
baseball	Sports	1
tennis	Sports	2
ski	Sports	3
Introquiz	Quiz	1
Jesturequiz	Quiz	2

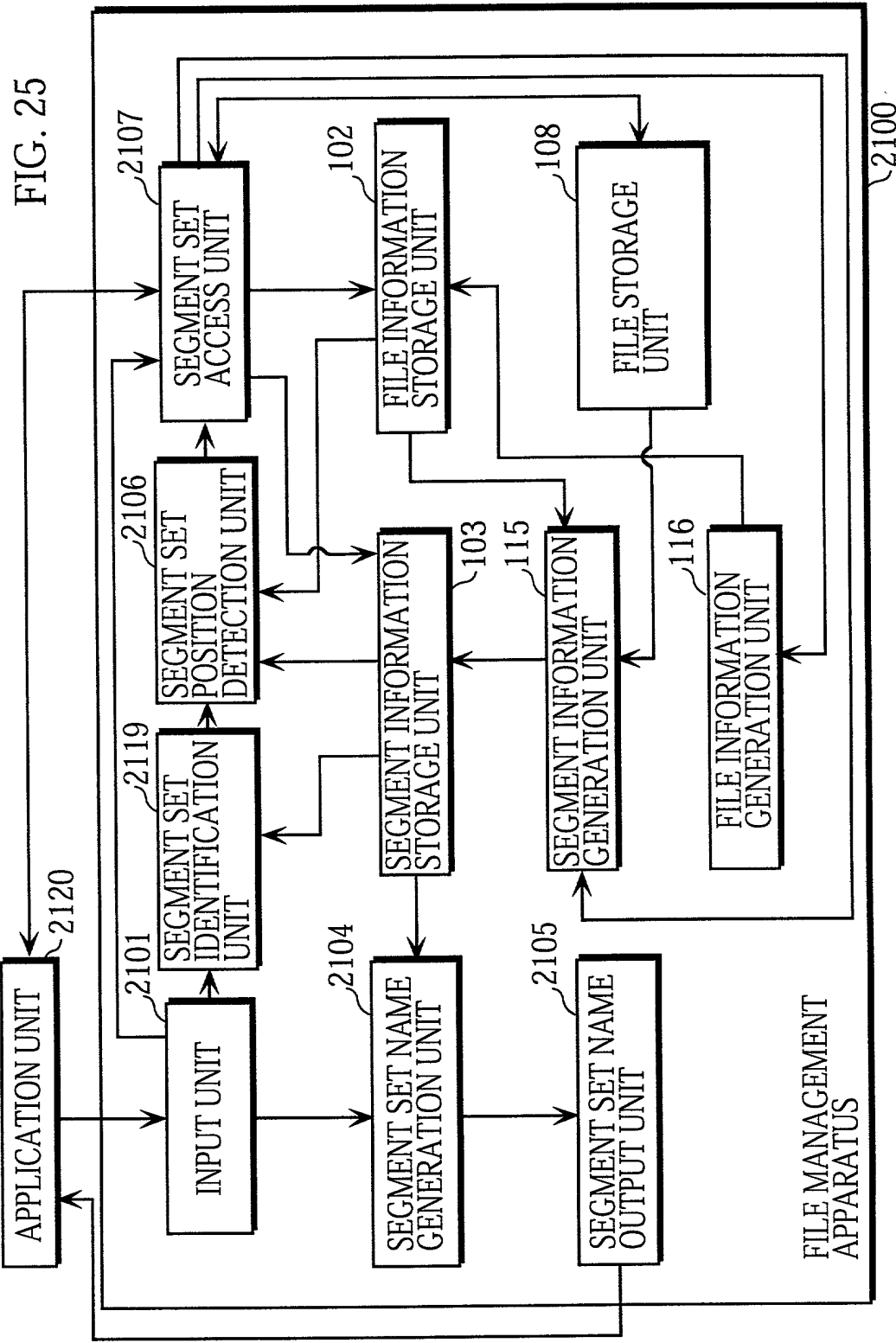


FIG. 26A

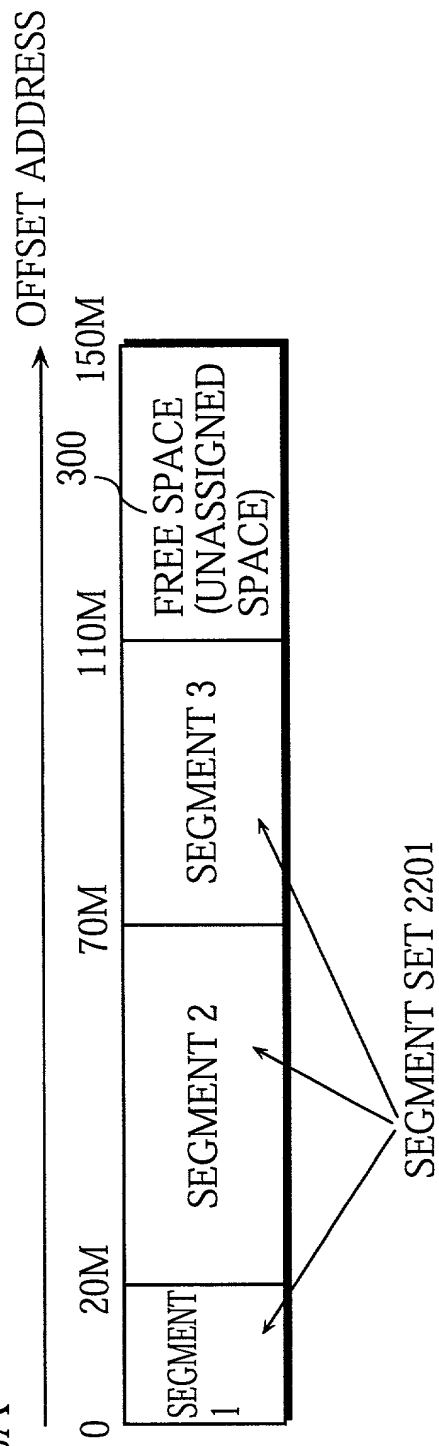


FIG. 26B

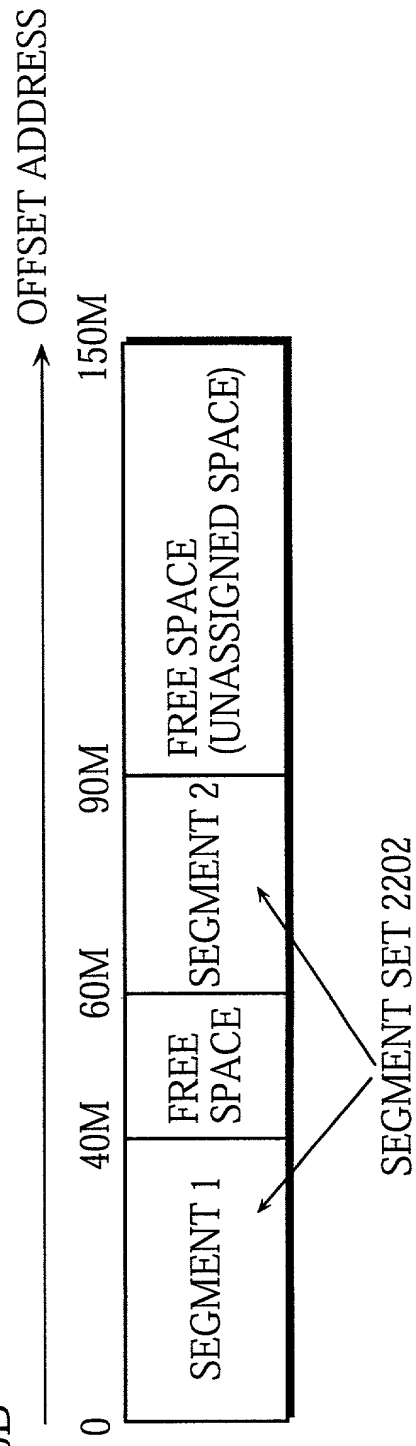


FIG. 27

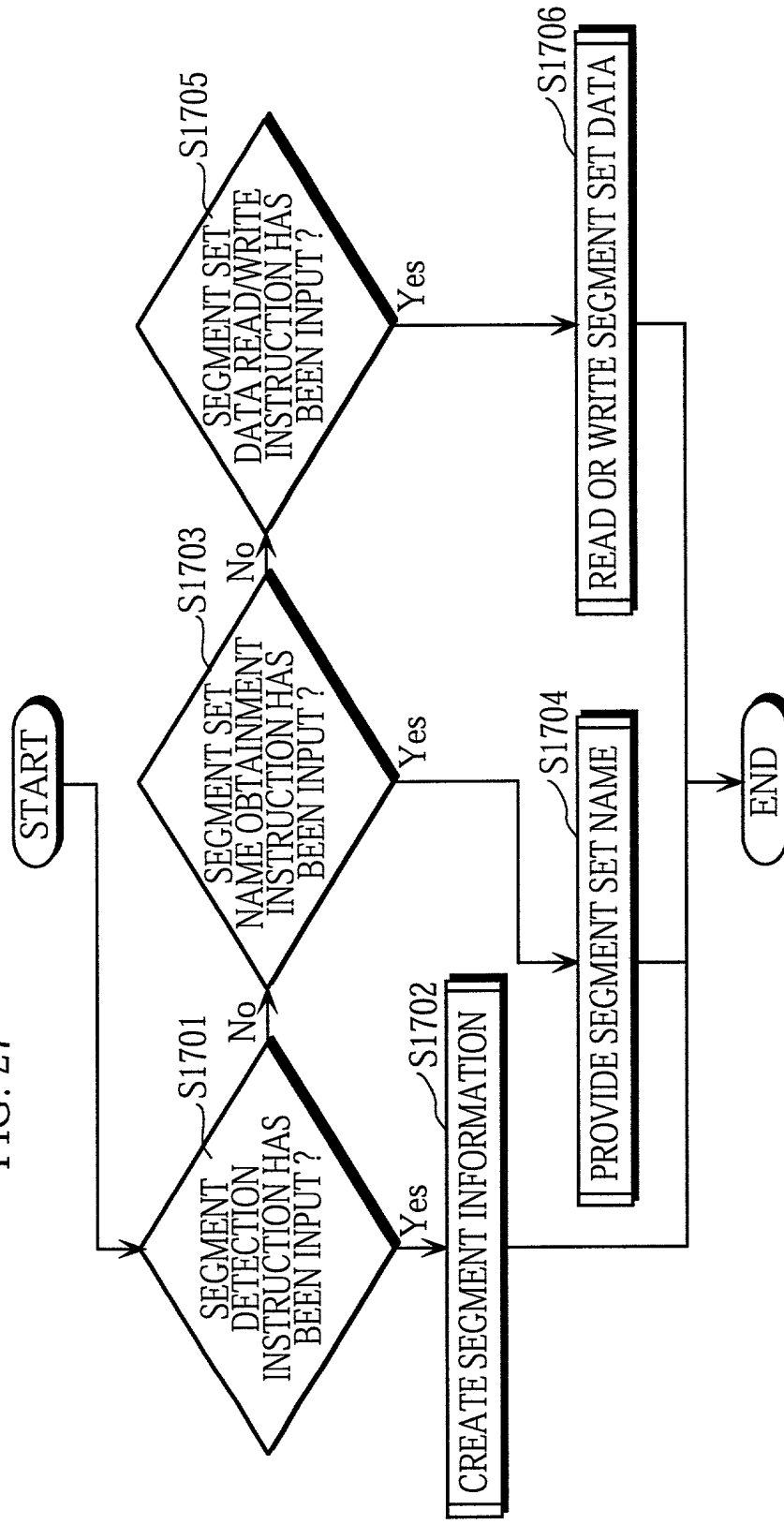
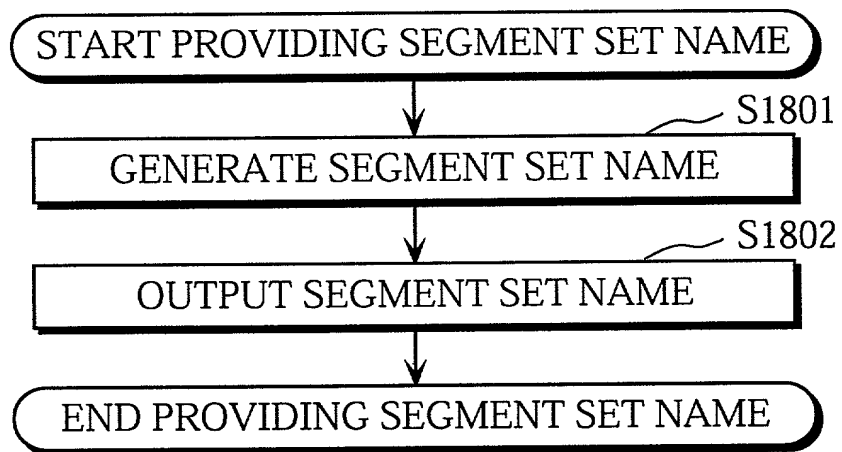


FIG. 28



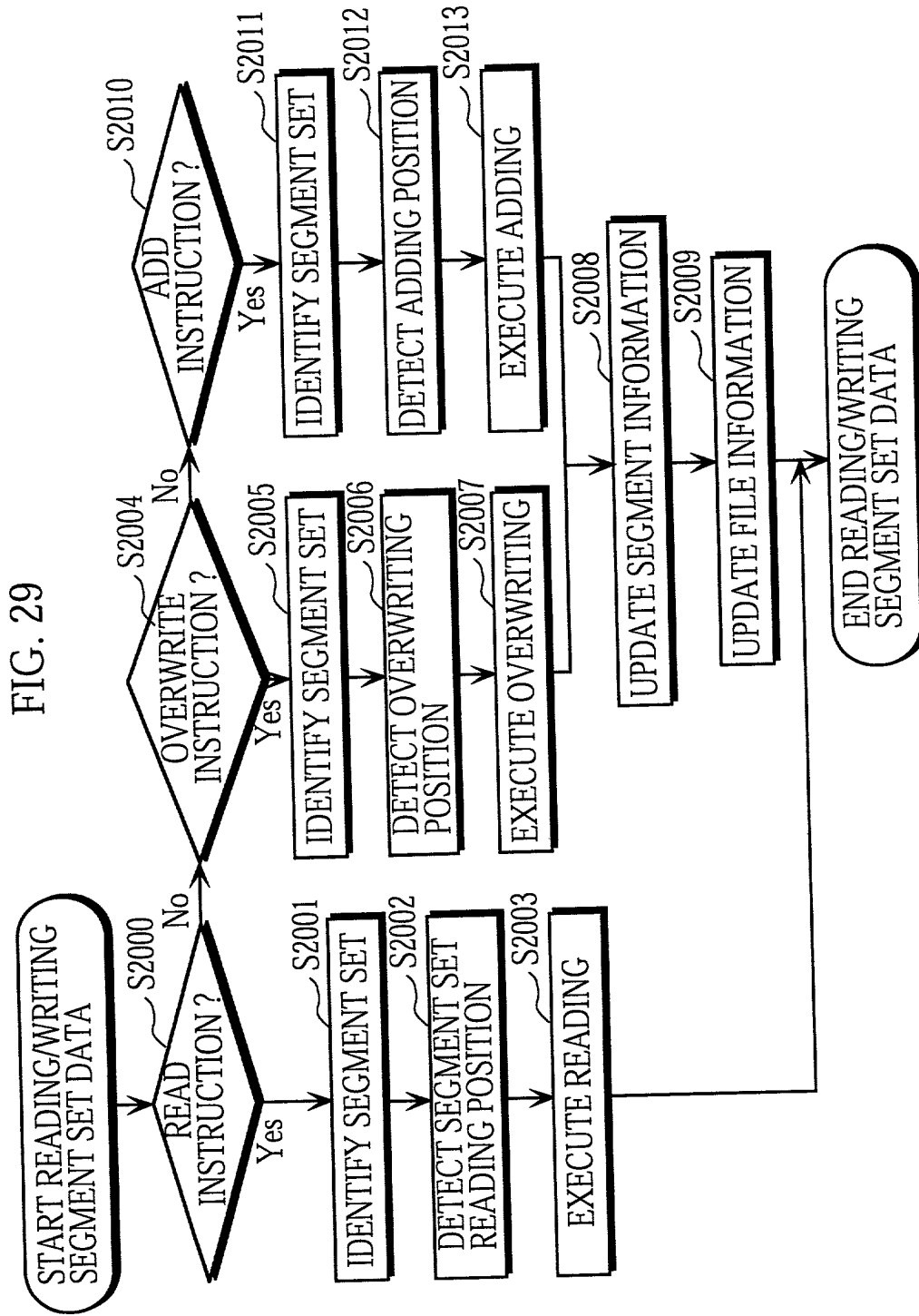


FIG. 30A

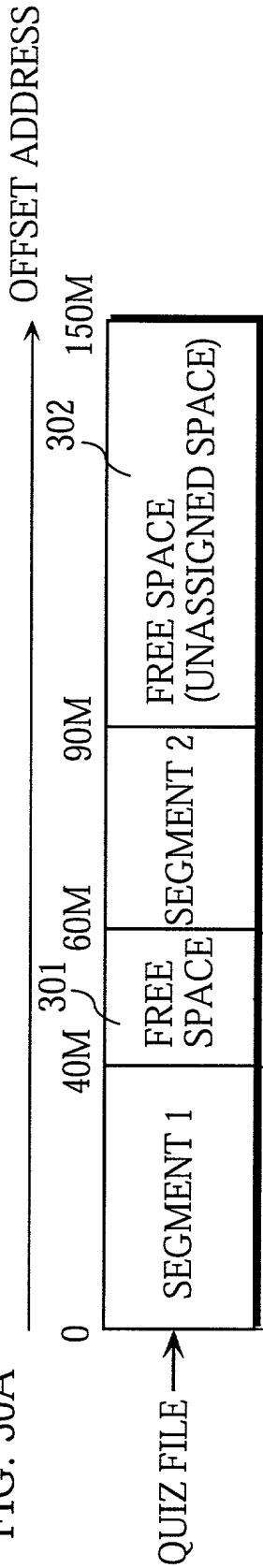


FIG. 30B

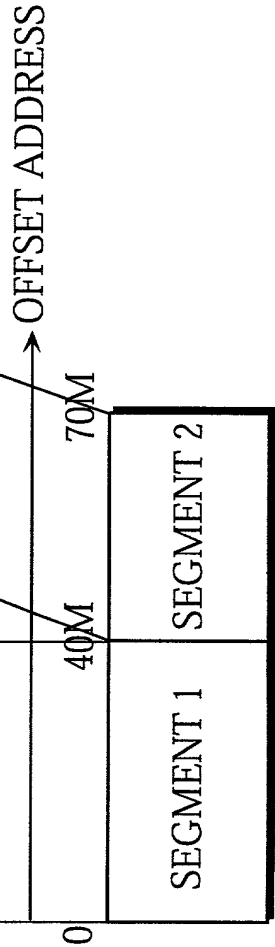


FIG. 31

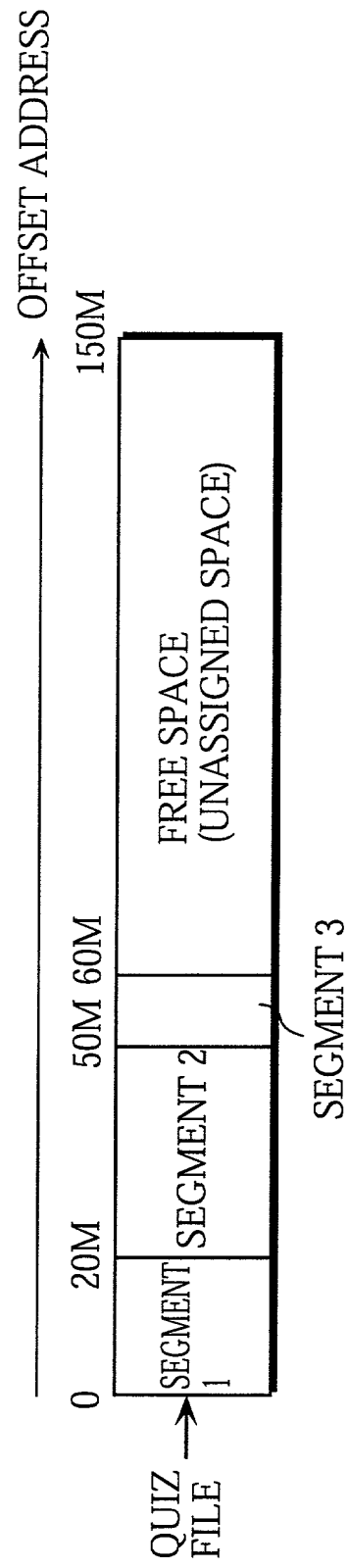


FIG. 32

QUIZ FILE		
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
SEGMENT 1	0	20M
SEGMENT 2	20M	30M
SEGMENT 3	50M	10M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	60M	90M

FIG. 33

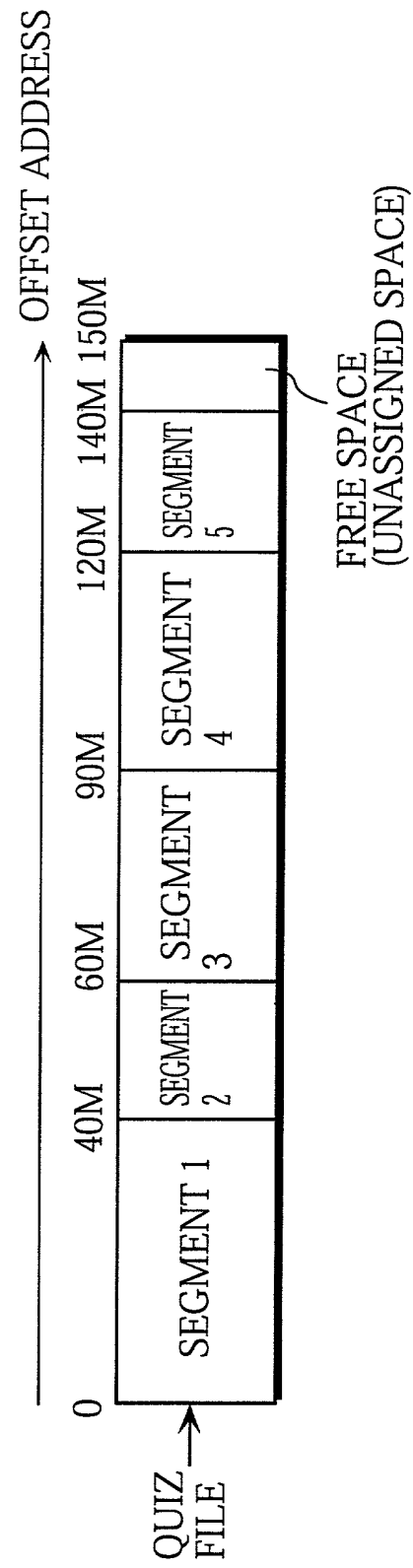


FIG. 34

QUIZ FILE		
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)
SEGMENT 1	0	40M
SEGMENT 2	40M	20M
SEGMENT 3	60M	30M
SEGMENT 4	90M	30M
SEGMENT 5	120M	20M
UNASSIGNED SPACE	140M	10M

2520

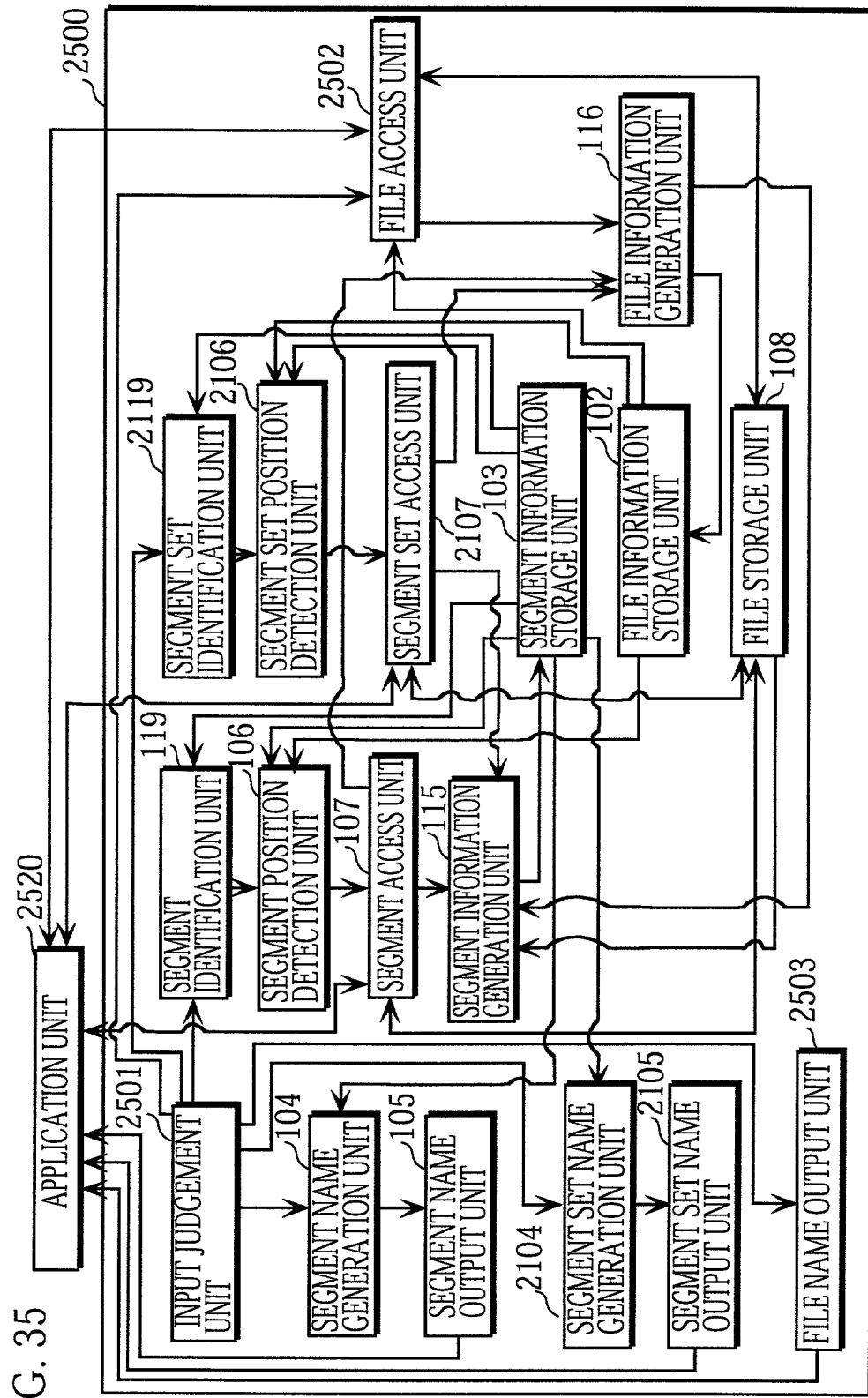
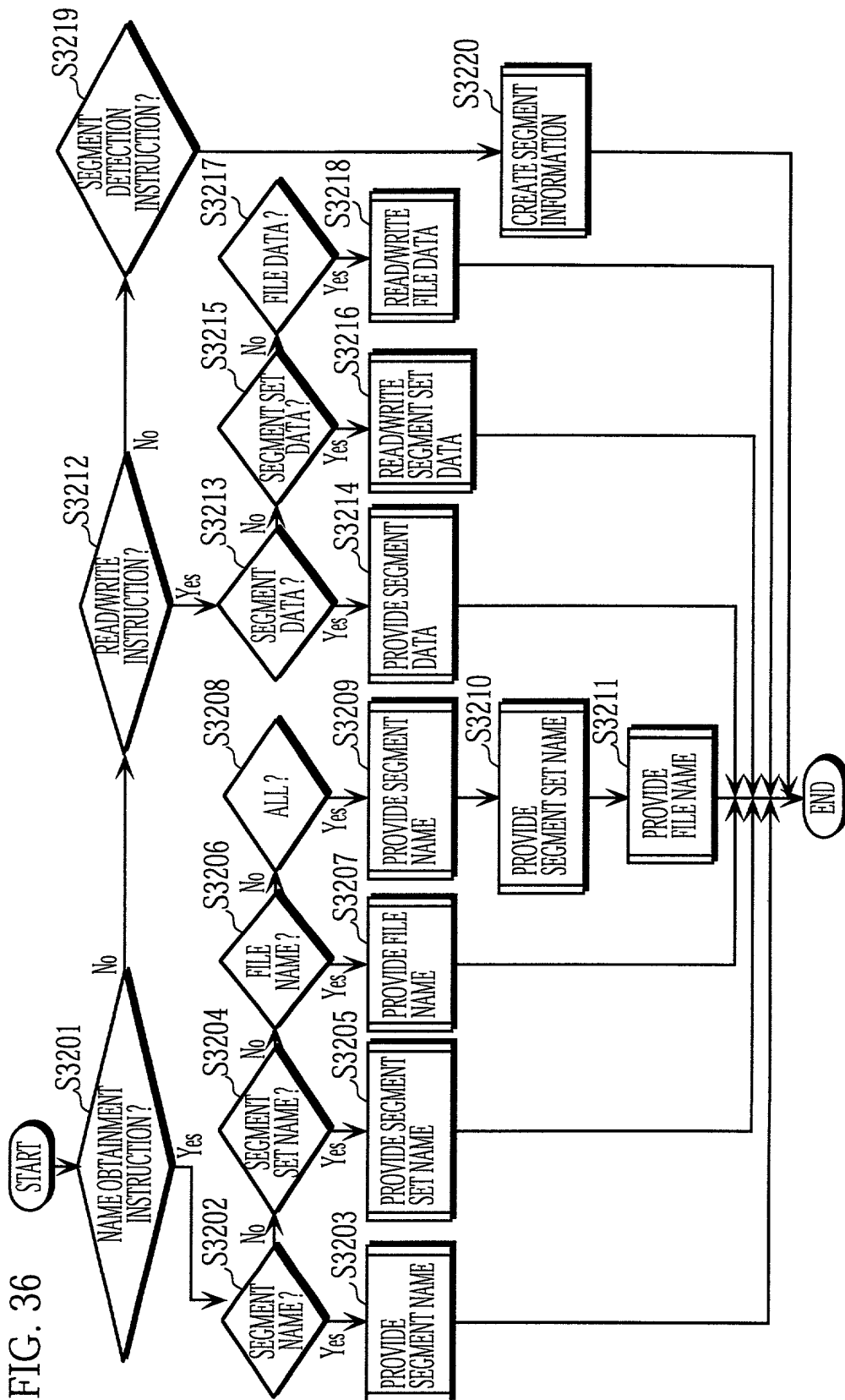


FIG. 36



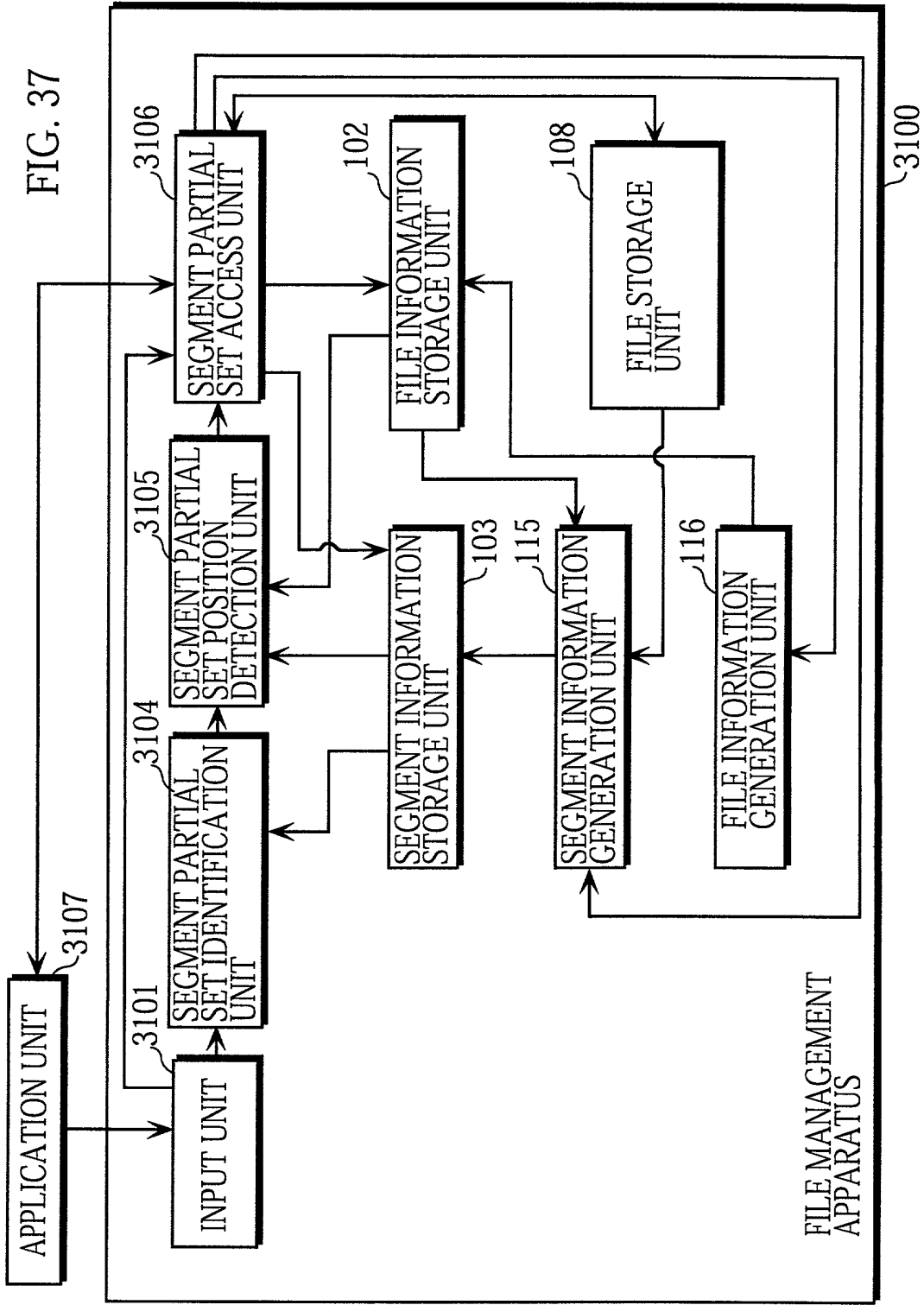


FIG. 37

FIG. 37 is a block diagram of a file management apparatus according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 38A

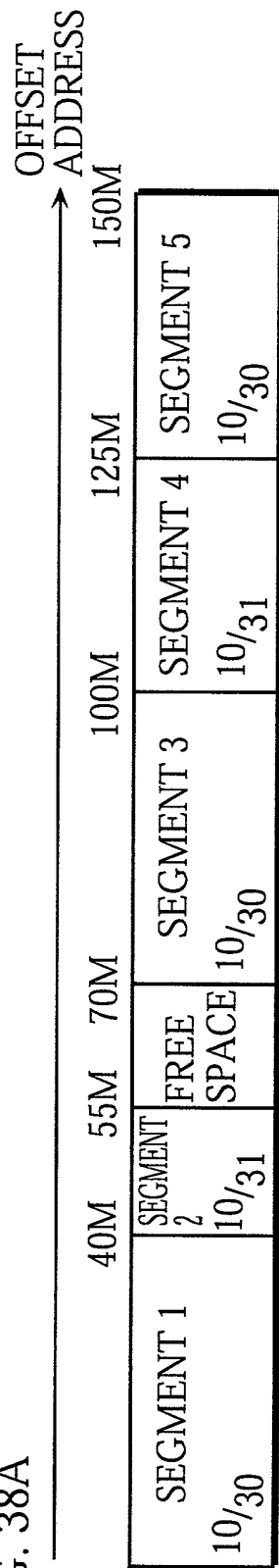


FIG. 38D

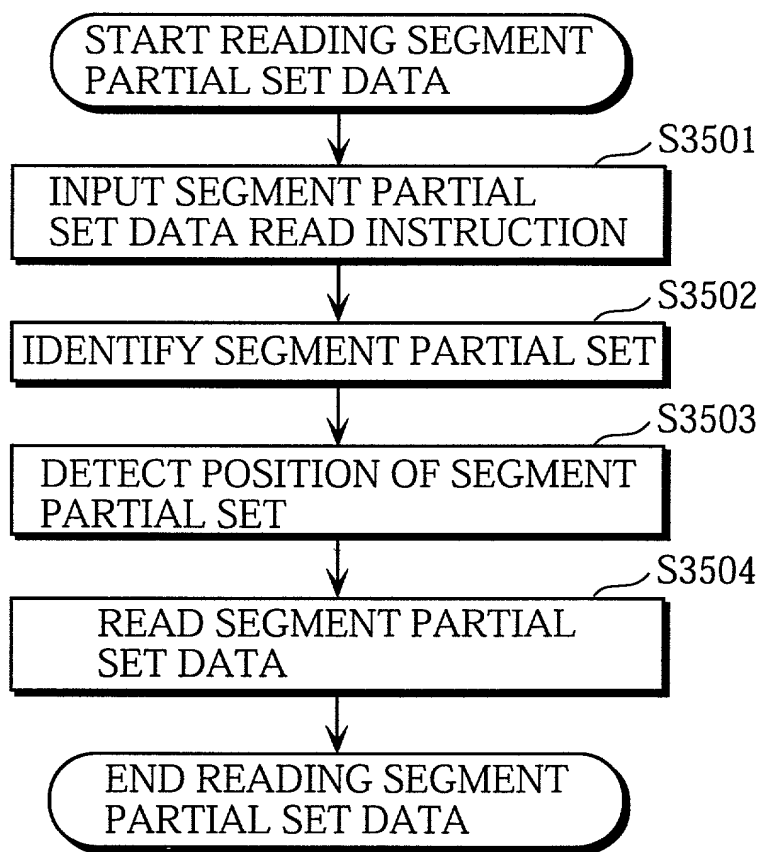


FIG. 38B

SPORTS FILE				
SEGMENT	START OFFSET ADDRESS (BYTE)	SEGMENT LENGTH (BYTE)	START TIME	END TIME
SEGMENT 1	0	40M	99/10/30 10:42:03:27	99/10/30 10:48:06:15
SEGMENT 2	40M	15M	99/10/31 12:21:03:08	99/10/31 12:23:15:15
SEGMENT 3	70M	30M	99/10/30 18:44:26:04	99/10/30 18:48:32:02
SEGMENT 4	100M	25M	99/10/31 18:42:21:14	99/10/31 18:47:24:15
SEGMENT 5	125M	25M	99/10/30 12:21:06:18	99/10/30 12:24:07:15
UNASSIGNED SPACE	55M	15M		

FIG. 38C >Get Sports -F 1999/10/30 -sort

FIG. 39



PRICE AND GESS

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

JOSEPH W. PRICE
ALBIN H. GESS
MICHAEL J. MOFFATT
GORDON E. GRAY III
BRADLEY D. BLANCHE

2100 S.E. MAIN STREET, SUITE 250

IRVINE, CALIFORNIA 92614-6238

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
TELEPHONE: (949) 261-8433
FACSIMILE: (949) 261-9072
FACSIMILE: (949) 261-1726

OF COUNSEL
JAMES F. KIRK

e-mail: pgu@pgulaw.com

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

Applicant(s): Tomoko Yamaguchi et al. et al.
Title: FINAL MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHOD
Attorney's
Docket No.: NAK1-BN18

"EXPRESS MAIL" MAILING
LABEL NO. EM074234802US

DATE OF DEPOSIT: November 28, 2000

Docket No.
NAK1-BN18

Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

FILE MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHOD

the specification of which

(check one)

☐ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application No. or PCT International Application Number _____

and was amended on _____
(if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Not Claimed

11-340053	Japan	30/November/1999	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U. S. C. Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, C. F. R., Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. *(list name and registration number)*

Joseph W. Price, Reg. No. 25,124

Doyle B. Johnson, Reg. No. 39,240

Albin H. Gess, Reg. No. 25,726

Michael J. Moffatt, Reg. No. 39,304

Franklin D. Ubell, Reg. No. 27,009

Bradley D. Blanche, Reg. No. 38,387

Send Correspondence to: Joseph W. Price
PRICE, GESS & UBELL
2100 S.E. Main St., Ste. 250
Irvine, CA 92614

Direct Telephone Calls to: *(name and telephone number)*
Joseph W. Price, 949/261-8433

Full name of sole or first inventor		Tomoko YAMAGUCHI	
Sole or first inventor's signature		Date	
<i>Tomoko Yamaguchi</i>		20/Nov./2000	
Residence 51-24, Nishinakayama Ohta, Fujioka-cho, Nishikamo-gun, Aichi-ken 470-0431 Japan			
Citizenship Japan			
Post Office Address same as residence			

Full name of second inventor, if any		Toshio MIZUNO	
Second inventor's signature		Date	
<i>Toshio Mizuno</i>		20/Nov./2000	
Residence Abania Shigakouen Nibangai 3-305, 2-66, Chumaru-cho, Kita-ku, Nagoya-shi, Aichi-ken 462-0056 Japan			
Citizenship Japan			
Post Office Address same as residence			

Full name of third inventor, if any	
Motoshi SUZUKI	
Third inventor's signature	Date
<i>Motoshi Suzuki</i>	20/Nov./2000
Residence Aza Nakairi 166, Oaza Ubukaji, Nishiharu-cho, Nishikasugai-gun, Aichi-ken 481-0035 Japan	
Citizenship	
Japan	
Post Office Address	
same as residence	

Full name of fourth inventor, if any	
Fourth inventor's signature	Date
Residence	
Citizenship	
Post Office Address	

Full name of fifth inventor, if any	
Fifth inventor's signature	Date
Residence	
Citizenship	
Post Office Address	

Full name of sixth inventor, if any	
Sixth inventor's signature	Date
Residence	
Citizenship	
Post Office Address	